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THE DIVINE REVOLUTION

Studies and Reflections upon the Passion of our Lord

BY

W. G. PECK

AUTHOR OF "THE VALUES OF THE SACRAMENT,"
"THE DIVINE SOCIETY,"
"CATHOLICISM AND HUMANITY," ETC.

MOREHOUSE PUBLISHING CO.
1801-1811 FOND DU LAC AVENUE
MILWAUKEE, WIS.
1927

BT
430
.P42
1927

First published, September 1927

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE EDINBURGH PRESS, 9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET, EDINBURGH

To

THE REVEREND W. E. ORCHARD, D.D.

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

THANKFULLY REMEMBERING TEN YEARS

OF INSPIRATION, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND

UNFAILING FRIENDSHIP

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INTRODUCTORY

The object of our Lord's Passion was the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Precisely how His sufferings make possible the entrance of men into that Kingdom is a question which raises issues long discussed by theologians. But whether His Sacrifice be offered to God, or to man, or to both God and man, its purpose is to make us participators in a holy and indestructible communion: to rescue us from a situation of real and appalling danger, and to bring us to our true home.

At this introductory stage it is not necessary to say more than a few words concerning the assumptions underlying our argument. To suppose that Christ died to redirect the course of human history, died in divine conflict with human action, clearly requires a conception of God as free and genuinely active, and of man as capable of opposing the activity of God and of thus creating for himself a position of real peril, by which his whole life must be affected.

The writer is convinced that for Christian thinkers to accept a philosophy originating in sources either definitely antichristian or merely non-religious, and to attempt to relate Christian doctrine to such a scheme of thought, is a method radically unsound. The necessary interplay of faith and metaphysic

must begin earlier. While it is true that the Faith needs to express itself philosophically, it is equally true that it provides supremely important data for philosophy. For the Faith is certainly in touch with a vivid and moving human experience, arising in a most significant historical setting and shared by men of widely diverse times and tempers.

The Gospel of the Cross requires our assent to certain initial conceptions concerning God and man, before it can exert its true power, and even before it can become intelligible. To have found it intelligible and to have lived in its power, implies that one has consciously or unconsciously rejected some doctrines of philosophy, and has accepted certain others. But the philosophical defence of those assumptions which are necessitated by the Passion as a deed of God, is not perhaps a labour in which the majority of readers are likely to be interested. Those who are disposed to look a little further into the question will find it discussed in the chapter entitled "Passion and Action" appended to this volume.

Besides recognizing the philosophical bearings of our main contention, it is very important to be assured that our view can be related to the actual teaching of our Lord, and that our chief conclusions can be directly deduced from His words and acts. The first part of the book is addressed to this task. It is inconceivable that the emphasis placed by the Church upon the Cross can be considered just, unless it can be shown that our Lord Himself placed a like emphasis upon it. We may believe that the Holy Spirit enlightens and teaches the Church; but

that so great a preoccupation with Calvary as the Church has displayed could be defended in the proved absence of any such concern in the mind of Christ, can scarcely be maintained. Now, criticism during the past generation has first denied that our Lord's death occupied any place in His teaching, or in His view of His vocation; and has later declared that, being obsessed by apocalyptic dreams, He attached supernatural significance to His death and expected immediate and miraculous results therefrom. Obviously, these two views cannot both be true, and we shall attempt to demonstrate that neither is true.

Our argument will be that in going to the Cross our Lord was revealing the divine activity in its essential nature, and that His great Act was intended to be the foundation of the Kingdom in this world, and a new basis of human cohesion. This is not to say that it has no significance for man's spiritual plight as a rebel against God, no effect of procuring our pardon, no sacrificial reference toward God. We rather believe that precisely because these values are inherent in the Death of Christ, His Passion becomes the regulative principle of society.

We shall see, in the second part of the book how our Lord, engaged upon this end, was received by men, and how He sustained His purpose in particular actions, in circumstances of oppressive difficulty and of extreme pain and distress. The conclusion will be that if the self-destructive course of human activity is to be reversed, we who profess Christ as Lord must be prepared for a real participa-

tion in His opposition to the world. For the Church is the revolutionary society, and the Christian life is the revolutionary life, involving a daily controversy with the plausible and familiar. The Cross, indeed, is so revolutionary as to be in opposition, not only to the human social order, but also to most of the revolutions against that order which have ever been attempted or proposed. Thus we shall see the Passion of our Lord as determining, not only the nature of our private morality, but also the sociological and economic conceptions from which our private morality can never be disentangled.

Finally we shall observe how the belief in our Lord's victorious Resurrection and Ascension pledges us to the belief in a thoroughly Christian society as the intended effect of His Sacrifice. But underlying our whole discussion will be the conviction that when He stretched Himself upon the Cross and invited the world to follow Him, He was laying anew the foundations of this world's life. For, if action is real, the death of Christ must be, for Christians, its standard and criterion. If in that death we perceive action in its true nature and fullest scope, it must follow that the Christian dogmatic will become the basis of a critique of human activity in all fields. And the Church, if it accept this view, must also accept the task of informing the world that its embattled assumptions, though defended by a massive secular apologetic, are in the unfortunate position of having been contradicted by God. The activity of the Cross, for example, cannot be reconciled with the economics of industrialism or with modern armed nationalism.

It is well to understand that the logic of the Church's foundation will inevitably force it into a certain holy disloyalty toward those powers and interests of the modern world which have patronized it as a docile ally. The Church has its own native world-order, involved in its adoration of that divine Lord Who shed His blood for men. The recollection of this truth, returning to the mind of the Church to-day, will yet become the most significant feature in the world situation.

PART I

THE MOTIVE OF THE PASSION

Those kinds of morals and that kind of religion which tend to make the firmest and most effectual character are sure to prevail, all else being the same ; and creeds and systems that conduce to a soft, limp mind tend to perish.—WALTER BAGEHOT, *Physics and Politics*.

I

OUR LORD'S CONCEPTION OF HIS DEATH

UPON any view of our Lord's Person and consciousness which can be called Christian, it is inconceivable that His death may be interpreted apart from what we can learn of His own conception of its necessity and significance. It is not in the least likely that we shall reach valuable results by *a priori* reasoning, while neglecting any close examination and estimate of His own utterances upon the subject. Had this canon always received due regard, some teaching concerning the Atonement could never have been uttered, and some would have been considerably modified. But we must understand that the corrective process would be applied not only to such theology as ignores the ethical value of our Lord's life and teaching and confines His work almost entirely to Calvary. It would have a quite equal effect upon the theology of ethical liberalism, for it would certainly establish the importance of His death in our Lord's own thought and teaching.

The crude assertion that the conception of Atonement through the death of Christ is devoid of adequate foundation in His recorded words, and has arisen from the speculations of St Paul and others, is simply contrary to plain fact. In that

book which may well be accepted as the classic exposition of liberal Christianity, *What is Christianity?* Harnack asks the question: "What attitude did Jesus himself take up toward his Gospel? Does he assume a position in it?" And the reply given is that He was Himself "the personal realization" of the Gospel (presumably in the sense that He was its finest fruit, and an *effect* thereof, as all Christian people are effects), and He may thus be said to have a place in the Gospel. He is the supreme illustration of the Gospel's power. But, Harnack continues: "the Gospel as Jesus proclaimed it has to do with the Father only, and not with the Son"; and he describes the belief that the message of God's forgiveness was dependent upon what was to be accomplished by our Lord's death, as "a desperate supposition." We shall presently see how wide of the truth is this judgment, and what violence it does to the Gospel narratives.

Equally false will seem the attempt to interpret our Lord's death as a purely natural and normal result of the line of conduct pursued by Him in the circumstances of His time and place, and thus as having been predictable by Him, without possessing any mystical connotation, or even any particular significance, in His view of His mission. Such an opinion is simply divorced from the plainest purport of the records.

Upon the other hand, a close examination of the terms in which our Lord spoke of His coming sufferings will rectify the notion that while His life and teaching possess ethical and social value for

this world, His death was a work whereof the whole sphere of effectiveness is to be discovered in the abolition of man's culpability before God. Upon such a presupposition, our Lord has sometimes been represented almost as a passive instrument in the " transaction of Calvary "; and this, as will appear, is quite incompatible with His own attitude as reflected in the Gospels. But it must be observed that any attribution of activity to our Lord in His sacrifice, which supposes that the one object of such activity was to overcome or assuage the wrath of God, is equally out of relation with anything that He is reported to have said.

At the same time, a collation of the relative passages, under critical guidance, produces an overwhelming impression that whatever may be the true meaning of His death, He did not look upon it merely as a means of stimulating human moral endeavour by force of a vivid example. Such exemplarist theorizing seems almost cheap and shallow, when one rises from the study of our Lord's foretelling of His sufferings, and from the clear implications as to their necessity and consequences which His reported words contain. The inadequately named " subjective " and " objective " conceptions of Atonement are alike based upon certain elements of Christian experience; but neither, alone, can be so stated as to seem a just and sufficient explanation of our Lord's meaning. Obviously, if He attached essential importance to His death, if that shadow lay upon all His earthly ministry, if He was concerned to educate His disciples in the expectation, and, to some small extent, in the un-

derstanding of it—and we shall see that unless the narratives are hopelessly misleading, this was the actual situation—then apparently He must have connected His teaching about His death with the other great elements in His Gospel.

That is to say, His death must be understood as His death; must be interpreted through His consciousness of His own Person. This must provide its primal meaning. And quite naturally, the emergence of direct teaching about that death must wait upon the rise of conviction, in the minds of the disciples, concerning that Person. But, in the second place, teaching about the death, if the subject is of such import, must be so connected with teaching about the Kingdom, that the Death and the Kingdom share an interpenetrative significance. And our contention is that His death did actually occupy so large a place in Christ's view of His mission, and in His teaching and training of His disciples, that in order to approach His mind upon this subject, we must study His predictions of His Passion in close relation with the other great features of His Gospel.

The principle of historical realism introduced into theology by modern criticism is of large value, and will retain a permanent place. The insistence upon the fact that we cannot understand the Faith until we have gone some way toward understanding the Jesus of history, is entirely healthy. But the assumption that this necessarily involves the discrediting of all transcendental views is already in process of dissolution. The principle requires simply that we shall first know, with reasonable

certainty, what Jesus said and did, form some adequate notion of the developments both in His situation and in His teaching, and then draw the conclusions which may be justified when this process has been correlated with what is otherwise indicated by experience and philosophy.

It was but natural, however, that the pursuit of the historical method should lead, in some instances, to false conclusions ; and nowhere have conclusions of more demonstrable falsity been reached, than upon the question of the genesis of our Lord's apprehension of His death. By imperfect application of their method, or by the neglect of important canons of criticism, scholars have sometimes concluded wrongly, both as to the causes of that apprehension, and as to the time of its first emergence in His consciousness. It has been held that Jesus came to expect a tragic termination of His ministry at a comparatively late time, and only when the manifest hostility of the national leaders had precluded the realization of His earlier hopes. Or it is said, as by certain adherents of the "eschatological" school, that coming, toward the close of His ministry, to the view that the Messiah must suffer before the Kingdom could appear, He took measures to ensure that His enemies would kill Him. In other words, if it may reverently be said, He decided to force the hand of God. This view certainly has the merit of seeing that Jesus *chose* death, and regarded His death as a positive action fraught with the purpose of securing an inestimable good: that it was not merely a fate which He saw to be approaching Him, and of which He was the

helpless and passive victim. We need not now discuss the whole "eschatological" interpretation of Jesus, for its influence is already waning. The hectic picture of a half-frenzied Messiah, immersed in conceptions radically false to reality, presented by the more extreme exponents of this view, is untrue to the most patent facts.

When our Lord's references to His coming sufferings are quietly examined, the conclusion must always be reached by unbiassed minds that their calmness and dignity are psychologically incompatible with the motives and mentality presupposed by the "eschatological" theories. There is, however, one point which concerns us here. We shall see, in the course of our study, that there are enormous objections to the supposition that a violent death was in any sense an afterthought with our Lord. There is ample evidence that it was not through any "development," either of His thought or of His circumstances, that He came to expect such an end. Without doubt, He spoke more frequently and more fully upon the subject, toward the close of His ministry; but even if His predictions had been confined entirely within that last period, it would be a gratuitous assumption to declare that He had but recently reconciled Himself to the prospect of a speedy and tragic conclusion. We must consider that a development in the teaching does not necessarily indicate a recent development in the mind of the teacher. The introduction of new elements does not prove that they were not in the teacher's mind from the first. Our Lord had to educate His disciples, and if we may say anything

of that situation, we surely may say that an early insistence upon His death would have left Him without any disciples to educate.

We turn, therefore, to the Gospel narratives, and our examination of them may convince us of the truth of four propositions. (1) That our Lord had from the beginning a clear expectation of an early and violent death at the hands of His enemies, and that to this event He attached a tremendous significance. (2) That His attitude to this death was one of resolute and positive choice, in such wise that it becomes His own action. (3) That He regarded it as of fundamental necessity for the production of certain glorious effects. (4) That He regarded it as constituting a revolutionary sanction for the lives of men.

(1) It is true that the great weight of our Lord's spoken testimony to a death shortly to be accomplished, falls within the period subsequent to St Peter's ascription to Him of Messiahship, at Cæsarea Philippi. Immediately thereafter we have the great Synoptic parallels (Matt. xvi. 21-end; Mark viii. 31-end; Luke ix. 18-27), which are considered to be the first announcement, in definite terms, of the coming Passion. These are followed by the reiterated prediction given in a further set of parallels (Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Mark ix. 30-32; Luke ix. 44). And yet again we have the parallel narratives referring to our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem, and the incident of the request of the sons of Zebedee, or of their mother (Matt. xx. 17-28; Mark x. 32-45). St Luke (xviii. 31-34) repeats

this particular narrative, with its detailed prediction of the humiliating sufferings which were to be endured, but omits the story of the sons of Zebedee. St Matthew and St Mark relate that our Lord asked the two young men if they were able to drink of His cup and to be baptized with His baptism; but St Luke attributes a somewhat similar expression to Jesus at an earlier time: "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke xii. 49, 50).

As the tragedy draws near, the insistence upon it becomes more frequent and more varied in form. The Synoptists (Matt. xxi. 33-41; Mark xii. 1-9; Luke xx. 9-16) relate the parable of the wicked husbandmen as spoken in Jerusalem very shortly before the end. St Matthew (xxvi. 6-12), St Mark (xiv. 3-9) and St John (xii. 1-8) give the beautiful story of the woman anointing Jesus with the precious unguent from her alabaster box, and our Lord's solemn saying that she had done it for His burial. The Fourth Gospel recounts that our Lord likened Himself to a good shepherd who would lay down His life for the sheep (x. 15, 17, 18); and also that He declared that being "lifted up" He would draw all men unto Him. This is explained as a reference to the manner of His death (xii. 32, 33). There remain the accounts of the Eucharistic Institution, at the very least an acted parable of a body broken and blood shed. And the whole series of predictions culminates in the combat of Gethsemane, where our Lord's consciousness of

the approaching event, in all its ineffable meaning, transcends the power of human analysis.

We have traced the predictions from their usually accepted starting-point, and we have already argued that the fact that our Lord became explicit upon this subject at a particular time does not prove that He had no prior knowledge of what was to befall. But we have also suggested that if His teaching became, to any large extent, concerned with His death, then that element must necessarily be related with the other great elements of His Gospel, one of which was nothing less than His own Person—*Himself*. If this be untrue, then it is impossible to make sense of the Synoptic narratives, wherein St Peter's words at Cæsarea Philippi are the very hinge and crisis of the story.[1] It was natural, therefore, that what He had to say upon the subject of His sufferings should be deferred until His followers had come to realize Who He was. Thus the first full and distinct utterance concerning His death follows immediately upon St Peter's confession of faith, though in the parallel accounts of this first prediction, no details are given. It is only said that He must "suffer many things," "be killed," and "be raised again the third day."

Later, the disciples are informed of the depth of the humiliation which their Master must undergo. The parallels of the second prediction add to the previous assertion the further knowledge that Jesus

[1] Dr Warschauer, *Historical Life of Christ*, agrees with Schweitzer in placing St Peter's confession after the Transfiguration, and in regarding it as "giving away" the Messianic secret to the whole of the Twelve. This seems arbitrary.

will be " betrayed " or " delivered " into the hands of His enemies. But upon the way to Jerusalem, apparently just before the incident of the sons of Zebedee, yet further shameful incidents are foretold. The priests and scribes will pass a death-sentence and will deliver their Victim to the Gentiles. Then will follow mocking, scourging and crucifying. St Mark and St Luke add the horrifying detail of the spitting. It is, of course, possible to suggest that these details, which actually occurred afterwards, were merely inserted in the records of the predictions. The disciples may have had only a confused memory of the words used by our Lord, and so attributed to Him predictions of a more minutely circumstantial character than He uttered. But upon that theory, there is no reason why they should not have placed all the details in the first prediction. What we have, in fact, is a careful unfolding of what is to come; and the hypothesis that this was performed by one who knew, for the sake of others who did not know and could scarcely bear the knowledge, is at least as good as any other.

As soon as the disciples are able to endure the thought of their Lord's violent death, they are told of its imminence. Having learned that, they are warned, a little later, of the shame of the betrayal. Later still, they are informed of the humiliating circumstances which will crowd upon Him. This looks like a method of deliberate education. And if there were such deliberation in His development of the expectation of the Cross in the minds of His followers, there may well have been deliberate design in the selection of the moment for its first

initiation. It is, at all events, extremely improbable that the first mention of the subject by Jesus occurred immediately after His own first apprehension of His end. The whole mode of His revelation of the coming tragedy bears the impress of carefully considered design; and this must throw the inception of the idea of crucifixion some considerable way back in His ministry. How far back, must be determined by other evidence. But it does appear that He had decided that what He had to tell His friends must wait upon the growth of their own spiritual discernment. His death must be understood, first of all, in connection with their knowledge of His Person.

Having done so much for His own followers, He can at length indicate the position to His enemies. This He does in the Temple, during His last days in Jerusalem, in the parable of the wicked husbandmen. The chief priests, scribes and elders, had asked Him a question concerning His authority. He replies with the parabolic prophecy that they, representing the Jewish people, having rejected and beaten the servants of the owner of the vineyard, would also kill his son. Thus, as the series of predictions began, so towards its culmination it was still concerned, with the connection between our Lord's death and His Person. And it may well be that for Him the consciousness of His own identity had always involved a foreknowledge of His earthly fate. At least it may be submitted that He was neither puzzled nor distraught by any sudden premonition of the disastrous failure of His mission. Nor did He, obsessed by frantic eschato-

logical notions, seek as an afterthought to force the very gates of heaven by an act of self-immolation. Rather it appears that His predictions of death were an orderly execution of a previously settled purpose, which had its roots in profounder considerations than the "eschatological" explanation suggests. We have said that to discover the genesis of the idea of His own death in the mind of our Lord we are thrown back to a period prior to the incident at Cæsarea Philippi. And we shall now maintain that, in view of our previous argument, it is not improbable that such a termination to His earthly career was foreseen by Him at the very commencement of His mission.

If the foregoing arguments have any strength, it is not to be expected that, in the narratives dealing with our Lord's sayings and doings before St Peter's confession, much clear reference to His Passion will be found. But there are some indications that He was fully aware of what the end would be, though the time for explicit reference had not yet come. The difficulty of finding a sufficient connection between the Synoptic and Johannine sequences of events is well known; and it is no easy matter to say into which part of the Johannine story the Synoptic predictions should be fitted. But it seems likely that His unwillingness to "walk in Jewry" (John vii. 1) because of the intention of the Jews to kill Him, belongs to the time immediately before His first prediction. And this, at first sight, may seem to show that the first prediction was provoked by some unexpected developments in the situation, specially when we

remember also the Johannine statement, belonging to this time and indicating the position in Galilee, that "many of the disciples went back and walked no more with him." But we have now to observe the precise manner in which St Matthew and St Mark relate the first prediction. St Matthew says that Jesus "began to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things." The word translated "to show" is δεικνύειν (Matt. xvi. 21), which has the primary meaning of "exhibiting," "presenting to sight"; and the suggestion may be that something which had previously been vaguely guessed by His hearers and dimly adumbrated by Himself, was now for the first time being explicitly announced. This supposition is strongly supported by the words of St Mark, after his narrative of this prediction: "And he spake that saying openly" (Mark viii. 32). The word translated "openly" is παρρησίᾳ, which carries the meaning of open, unreserved speech as opposed to veiled or oblique allusions. There would be little meaning in the particular words used by St Matthew and St Mark, unless the disciples had noticed such dark, incomprehensible hints before this time. The whole manner of these two passages really gives the impression that our Lord was at length speaking plainly upon a subject to which He had previously referred so guardedly as to puzzle His followers. If that deduction is untrue, it is singular that the same impression is given by different words used by two writers. Are there any traces of such earlier references upon the part of our Lord?

According to the Synoptists, there occurred in the very early days of His ministry some incidents which might have been sufficient to cause any prophet to perceive the worst possibilities. And the narratives show that they evoked from Jesus an utterance, which in its calm quality and casual incidence reveals His inner mind. The hearers may have found the saying dark enough, but for us it lights up the whole outlook of our Lord in those early days.

From Renan onwards, it has been supposed by many writers that there was a marked difference between our Lord's tone and temper in the opening stages of His ministry and in the later period, when He is said to have become conscious of defeat, and to have fallen either into a gloomy irritability, or into a kind of mania in which He conceived that His death would bring about that world-transformation which His teaching had failed to produce. But there is radical unsoundness in these speculations; for, as a matter of fact, He encountered considerable opposition at the outset of His work.

According to St Mark's [1] narrative, having passed through His temptation, He came into Galilee "preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God"; and having called certain disciples, He took up His abode in Capernaum. But St Matthew [2] tells us that "*leaving Nazareth*, he came and dwelt in Capernaum." St Luke [3] places here the narrative of the rejection of Jesus by the people of Nazareth, and their attempt upon His life: an incident which

[1] Mark i. 14-21. [2] Matt. iv. 13. [3] Luke iv. 14-32.

St Matthew[1] and St Mark[2] introduce at a later stage.[3] It certainly seems that at this point St Luke's account gives a more logical chronology, and if we may trust it, our Lord had already been assaulted and driven away by His own townsmen when He came, thus early in His mission, to Capernaum, which seems to have been for a time the centre, but not the sole sphere, of His activities. And here, according to the direct statements of St Matthew and St Mark—and presumably St Luke also (v. 12) refers to Capernaum—He healed and forgave the "sick of the palsy" who was let down through a house-roof. At once there was an outburst of criticism from "certain scribes," who accused Him of the serious offence of "blasphemy," for which the traditional punishment was death by stoning.

This incident was followed by the call of Levi, the son of Alphæus, in whose house our Lord was shortly afterwards accosted by scribes and Pharisees who found fault with His eating with publicans and sinners. There followed some discussion of the contrast between the fasting of the Pharisees and the disciples of John Baptist, and the neglect of fasting by the disciples of Jesus. Already then, He has awakened opposition of a serious and strenuous character, not only amongst His own people, but amongst the leaders of religious thought in the district. And it is at this point that He lets fall the remark to which we have already referred: "Can the

[1] Matt. xiii. 53-58. [2] Mark vi. 1-6.

[3] But Matthew and Mark may possibly be recording a later visit to Nazareth.

children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Matt. ix. 15; Mark ii. 19).

It has been suggested that this refers to no more than the ordinary mortality which we all share. The suggestion seems psychologically impossible. Why should Jesus, a young man, thus suddenly defend His followers' behaviour upon the ground that He would have to die at some time or other? Such a defence would have been either consciously insincere, or else a piece of sheer sentimentalism. Let it be recalled that the words were spoken to opponents, after our Lord had measured them. He knew already what the result would be. St Mark, at all events, tells us soon afterwards (iii. 6) that plots for His destruction were speedily afoot; and that scribes came down from Jerusalem to challenge Him (iii. 22). A situation governed by such factors could not have been misinterpreted by our Lord, even when a specious popular enthusiasm might seem to assure a prosperous course. From early days, therefore, He was accustomed to look for a bloody and terrible event as the upshot of His labours. It is even possible to carry back His expectation of great suffering and violent death to a yet earlier period.

Possibly the story of His baptism was told by Jesus Himself to His disciples. And the "voice" which He then heard must be presumed to have provided for Him the meaning of His experience

at that time. It is significant that the words heard by Him are compounded of two passages of Scripture, from Ps. ii. 7; and Isa. xlii. 1: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." "Behold my servant whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him." It seems that already He was persuaded that His was the vocation, not only of the Son of God, the great King, but also of the Suffering Servant. It was a passage from Deutero-Isaiah that He read when shortly afterwards (according to St Luke) He stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth.

Dr Denney [1] has remarked upon such considerations, that "on the ground of the evidence which is here available, we must hold that from the very beginning of His public work the sense of something tragic in His destiny . . . was present to the mind of Jesus." And he further points out an inference which is to be drawn from our Lord's temptation: "A soul which sees its vocation shadowed out in the Servant of the Lord, which is driven of the Spirit into the wilderness to face the dreadful alternatives raised by that vocation, and which takes the side which Jesus took in conflict with the enemy, does not enter on its life-work with any superficial illusions."

Our study of our Lord's definite predictions; our notice of certain words and incidents which occurred before the predictions and may be discovered at the outset of His public career; the evidence that He was concerned to educate His disciples in the expectation of His death, all go to show that He

[1] *Death of Christ*, p. 15 ff.

Himself attached tremendous significance to it. It is not conceivable that He should have been so concerned about His own fate, unless that were somehow of vital importance in His view of His mission. If, as Harnack supposed, His Gospel in no sense depended upon His death, why did He spend so much time in speaking of His death? He might, of course, have warned His disciples of its approach, only to bid them attach no importance to it, and not to allow it to check their preaching of the Gospel. There is not a word in the narratives to suggest that this was His course. Rather, His death becomes a great subject of His discourse, an element of His Gospel.

As we see the picture, He appears from the first fully aware of the shadows which lower upon the end of the road. But for His own good reasons He will not speak directly of them, until His disciples have first discovered that He is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." When that has happened, He speedily tells them in the plainest words that He is to die at the hands of His enemies. He repeats this lesson, from time to time, adding the terrible details of His humiliation and suffering. As the end approaches, the references grow more numerous, and more varied in form, but clothed always with a solemn significance which lies even to-day upon these portions of the narrative, so that the reader feels himself engaged with a dramatic movement of unutterable poignancy. Thus it becomes impossible to imagine that His death was for Him no more than "death." It was part of His vocation: part of His Gospel. So far from the

Gospel not depending upon His death, His death is a vital and constructive element in the Gospel. This will become yet more clear, when we consider the attitude which He constantly preserved toward it.

(2) Whether or not our Lord's submission to baptism, and His conquest over temptation, involved for Him a conscious anticipation of death at the hands of men, His saying concerning the children of the bridechamber may be fairly taken to establish the argument that quite early in His ministry He was reconciled to such issues as did actually arise. It is unnecessary to comment upon the majesty of the courage which could for so long a time look that culmination in the face. But as we follow the predictions which He uttered with increasing detail and precision, we observe that He gradually reveals the truth of His own attitude to death, so that features of that attitude at first unseen become afterwards boldly outlined. At the beginning He might almost appear to be accepting it as one accepts the inevitable. The " children of the bridechamber " passage goes no further than this. Indeed, the parallels of the first great prediction suggest little more. But when the disciples are informed more fully of the details of the approaching sufferings, their Master begins to indicate that it is not merely a question of being " delivered " or " betrayed " into the hands of men.

According to St Matthew, the first prediction contained the information that " he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer "; but even that phrase might mean no more than obedience to some external

constraint. But as His predictions unfold the harrowing details of the sorrows to come, so they reveal all the signs of a great, masterful purpose. "Behold," He says, "we go up to Jerusalem." It was clear, then, that if He must suffer in Jerusalem, He was perfectly willing to suffer. Indeed, His words after the incident of the sons of Zebedee upon the road to Jerusalem, define His attitude as thus purposive from the commencement: "*The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*" He was now deliberately going to His betrayal and death. And it is impossible to explain that this was a final acceptance of the inevitable with a show of noble bravado. What was coming was inevitable only if He made it so by pressing the situation to a decision: and it must now appear that such had been His resolve from the beginning. He had come precisely for the purpose of pressing the situation to a decision.

Even before He revealed by word His own "will to death," His own positive intention, His manner had deeply impressed His followers. According both to St Mark and St Luke, it was after His second prediction that there was noticed in Him some terrific concentration of energy and volition. St Luke (ix. 51) says that "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." And St Mark (x. 32) tells us that "Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid." Upon these words Professor Rudolf Otto offers some apposite remarks.[1] He finds St Mark's words

[1] *Idea of the Holy*, pp. 162-3.

conveying an "immediate impression of the numinous." The word used, ἐθαμβοῦντο, indicates a blank paralysis of wonder, as though these disciples now saw in Jesus some force of determination passing all known bounds.

That this appeared at a particular time is no proof that our Lord's resolve was of late and sudden origin. St Luke explains that "the time was come that he should be received up." And St Mark says that they were already "in the way, going up to Jerusalem." All that is to be inferred is that Jesus had chosen to do now what He had always intended to do at the right moment. It is perhaps significant that such change as came upon our Lord's words and manner, came after His Transfiguration; but at all events, it was His mode of summoning His resources, rather than His purpose, which now astonished His followers. Certainly that purpose is too steady and clear, too closely accompanied by wise words and gentle deeds, to be the outcome of either pique or panic. It cannot fairly be said to be the decision of a constrained and overwrought fanatic. It is a purpose which seems to be sustained by a deep and far-seeing wisdom. It looks like a beneficent purpose springing from a richly creative mind.

Eventually we find Jesus making arrangements for the Last Supper—and it is worthy of note how carefully He laid His plans for that occasion. His concern that there should be no hitch, His provision as for some moment of highest import, have left a deep impression upon the Synoptic records (Matt. xxvi. 17-19; Mark xiv. 12-16; Luke xxii. 7-13).

And in the Eucharistic Institution we see Him performing certain actions and uttering certain words which, whatever be their true and complete interpretation, undoubtedly mean that before the crucifixion Jesus offered His death as a gift to His friends and as something accomplished for their sakes. Indeed, He says that His blood is shed "for many."

All this points to the conclusion that our Lord's attitude to His death was one of resolute and positive choice, in suchwise that it became, in a true sense, His own action. It was a deed which He had come to perform. And it cannot be said that the words attributed to Him in the Fourth Gospel go beyond the definition of His attitude which we have discovered in the Synoptics: "I lay down my life. . . . No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down. . . ."

But the urgent question arises: What, in view of such firmly-held and long-sustained purpose, are we to say of the words uttered during the Agony in Gethsemane? These have the appearance of indicating a breakdown, or at least a wavering, of will; and they have puzzled many. At this stage we need do no more than indicate a point of view. It is possible that the Agony of our Lord is the complete revelation of His whole attitude to the Cross, and provides an insight into the vast and appalling implications of His purpose which otherwise might have remained entirely beyond our ken. It thus helps to explain that supernatural energy of resolve which had brought Him to Jerusalem.

This view has been outlined elsewhere;[1] and we shall return to it again; but it will first be necessary to resume our study of the predictions, in order to establish the two remaining propositions.

(3) We have now to see that our Lord regarded His death as of fundamental necessity for the production of certain glorious effects. If at the time of His Baptism He was already thinking of His vocation in such terms as had been applied to the Suffering Servant, He must have considered that His own sufferings would be fruitful of some great blessing for mankind. And nowhere does He announce His death in terms of defeat. The first prediction is so placed in the Synoptic narratives as to convince us that He did actually set the three great elements of His Gospel in close juxtaposition. St Peter's ascription to Him of Messiahship is followed by a warning of His coming death. This is accompanied by a prediction of speedy resurrection. And then follow, in the three accounts, various reports of teaching about the Kingdom. Here we have the Person, the Death, and the Kingdom conjointly considered. St Matthew concludes his narrative of the first prediction with a direct eschatological prophecy (xvi. 27, 28). St Mark does similarly (viii. 38), and St Luke also (ix. 26). And in each instance there is a clear connection of argument, a link of thought, between the prediction of death and the prophecy of glorious consummation, which we shall examine more closely when we reach our final proposition.

[1] *The Divine Society*, pp. 204 *et seq.*

The narratives of the second prediction reveal yet more clearly the connection which must have existed in our Lord's teaching, between His Death and His Kingdom. St Matthew (xvii. 22, 23) informs us that "while they abode in Galilee," after the Transfiguration, our Lord proceeded to expand His earlier prediction of a violent death, and to supply certain dreadful details. He then introduces a visit to Capernaum and the incident of St Peter and the tribute-money; and goes on, in the next chapter, to say that "at the same time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" St Mark (ix. 33), however, having stated that the second prediction was given in Galilee, and bringing our Lord and His disciples to Capernaum, makes it plain that there had been a dispute as to who should be first in the Kingdom, even while they had been on the road thither. This justifies us in assuming that almost immediately after the second prediction, they had fallen to discussing the Kingdom. And St Luke (ix. 43-46) leaves no doubt upon the question. The only possible inference is that our Lord had actually connected the coming of the Kingdom with His death. His followers were unable to understand the true nature of the connection; but He certainly seems to have made it plain to them that without His death the Kingdom could not possibly appear in this world.

There are further passages which compel the same conclusion. There is the definite instance of the request of the sons of Zebedee for places in the Kingdom, immediately following the announcement

of the details of the Passion, upon the road to Jerusalem. There is the utterance, recorded only by St Luke: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (St Luke xii. 50). The word *συνέχομαι* has been understood, by various scholars, in various senses, often in accordance with their own presuppositions. Thus, while some understand that our Lord was expressing a fervent desire for the accomplishment of His purpose, others, like J. Weiss and Holtzmann, take the word as indicating His shrinking from the death which He saw to be awaiting Him. But in sober reason, the word is not difficult to translate, and the English version seems to translate it with sufficient accuracy—"straitened"; and the meaning usually understood is "confined," "constrained," "hampered." The implication is that our Lord knew that His own power, and His Gospel, were denied full scope, until His death had come to pass.

There is yet another significant passage, in the Fourth Gospel, connected with the incident of the coming of the Greeks who wished to see Jesus. Having spoken of His approaching glory by way of the grave (xii. 23, 24) our Lord exclaims: "Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." This recognition of the tremendous issues depending upon His death is followed by the prayer, "Father, glorify thy name." Then comes a "voice from heaven," "I have both glorified it and will glorify it." And our Lord interprets this utterance in the great words: "If I be lifted up, I

will draw all men unto me" (John xii. 27-33). This indeed may be to some extent the later reflection of a mystical mind. But it is reflection upon precisely such original material as the Synoptics provide, and does not in principle exceed their meaning.

To say, then, with Harnack, that the belief that the message of God's forgiveness was dependent upon what was to be accomplished by our Lord's death and resurrection is "a desperate supposition," is to require the elimination from the Gospel narratives of some elements which appear, even upon logical and critical grounds, to belong to their basic texture. It seems indubitable that, in our Lord's estimate, the supreme object of His mission could not be achieved without His death; and presumably the restoration of communion between God and man was at least part of that object. Moreover, His death was to be somehow fundamental in the Kingdom: in some sense the inauguration of the Kingdom. And we shall find this conclusion strengthened when we discuss our fourth and last proposition, that our Lord, in predicting His death, regarded it as constituting a revolutionary sanction for human conduct.

(4) The significance of the setting of our Lord's requirement of His followers that they should "take up the cross" and "follow" Him, has not been sufficiently emphasized. It is the setting, the context, the occasion, which in each instance is illuminating, and determines our interpretation of His command. We shall find therein a majestic

and revolutionary implication, and one which bears with tremendous force upon theology and practical life. The Synoptic records, as we have seen, connect our Lord's teaching about the Kingdom, upon certain critical occasions, with His teaching about His Passion. But in each of these narratives, the connection is not immediate. There is a link of thought between the two great themes: a link of thought, supporting all holy revolutions and crusades, all the deeds of missionaries and martyrs, all the Christian protest against the standards of this world.

According to St Matthew and St Mark, the first prediction was followed by a protest by St Peter, which drew upon him a sharp rebuke (Matt. xvi. 22, 23; Mark viii. 32, 33). Then, in both stories, there occurs a discourse, in which our Lord utters an urgent plea that His followers shall "take up the cross." He speaks of "saving" and "losing" one's life, and asks what profit there is in gaining the world and losing one's soul. This is followed by the eschatological prediction; and, according to St Mark, Jesus goes on to declare that to be "ashamed" of Him—that is, apparently, of "Him crucified"—and of His words in this adulterous and sinful generation, will set a man in a position of shame before the Son of Man coming in His glory.

Now, it is scarcely possible to argue that this practical exhortation arose merely out of St Peter's protest, and not directly out of any intention to make the acceptance of the cross by men a link of connection between His own, shameful death, and

the coming of the glorious Kingdom of God. Obviously, St Peter's protest is an interruption, and that incident is closed by the rebuke. There can be no doubt that the call to "take up the cross" was a call to accept in some profound and disturbingly practical sense, that death to which reference had just been made. The eschatological prophecy follows immediately upon this call; and in St Mark's account this prophecy is linked both with the "death" and with man's acceptance of it, by the saying concerning those who shall be "ashamed" of Him. The point is made yet clearer by St Luke, who omits entirely the incident of St Peter's protest. Here we have the prediction of the death, the assertion of its urgent claim upon men, and the prophecy of the Kingdom, in uninterrupted connection.

The second prediction of death is likewise followed, apparently closely, by the utterance of certain searching and revolutionary ethical principles. St Matthew, St Mark and St Luke record that a dispute about pride of place in the Kingdom followed the prediction, and that our Lord set a little child in the midst of the disciples (Matt. xvii. 22—xviii. 6; Mark ix. 30-37; Luke ix. 43-48). The humility of the child is thus characteristic of the Kingdom which is to be founded upon the Cross. But the ethic of the Kingdom is further developed in the same, or in an associated, discourse, as reported by St Matthew and St Mark, and here occur the sayings about cutting off the offending hand or foot, and casting away an offending eye. And St Matthew places here the question of St Peter, as

to how often forgiveness is to be repeated, and the answer, "Until seventy times seven" (Matt. xviii.; Mark. ix.). St Matthew adds, in the same chapter, the parable of the unjust steward. And when St Luke tells of Jesus going to Jerusalem with set face, he adds incidents and records sayings which pointedly differentiate the ethic of our Lord from the accepted standards of the world, and force home a tremendous challenge and claim. Clearly, the ethic of the Kingdom is being formulated as based upon His own suffering and death. What He is about to do will revolutionize every sanction of human conduct. The whole argument seems to be that the ethic exerts its mighty claim, because the death reveals it as being the Eternal Ethic and the principle of God's own action.

There emerges the conception of God acting in the Passion of our Lord in such fashion as to reconstruct all human relations and refashion society. This purpose is at length definitely announced when, replying to the sons of Zebedee, Jesus says to His disciples, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 25-29; Mark x. 42-45). St Luke places this supreme announcement of the principle at a little later time—immediately after the Eucharistic Institution. The con-

textual sayings are quite apposite to the occasion, though of course the passage may be out of place here. On the other hand, it is quite possible that so explicit an application of the ethic of the Cross to the lives of men was uttered more than once.

It is needless to trace further the development of our Lord's teaching upon this subject, as recorded by the Synoptists. It remains only to be recalled that the Fourth Gospel contains in one beautiful passage the entire connection of ideas which we have found reiterated in Matthew, Mark and Luke. When Jesus was told of the coming of the Greeks who desired to see Him, His words, as reported (John xii. 23-28), express in order the three ideas: (*a*) That our Lord must die, in order to procure some great benefit for mankind (ver. 24). (*b*) That His sacrifice lays a claim upon practical behaviour (vers. 25, 26). (*c*) An announcement of glory to be realized.

One consideration must be added. The "eschatological" interpretation of our Lord's mind supposes that He determined to die, in order that He might thus procure a miraculous response from Heaven in the sudden establishment of the divine Kingdom upon earth. We have seen that He did suppose a relation between the death and the Kingdom. But we have seen also, what the "eschatological" school has been inclined to forget, that between the idea of His death, and the idea of the Kingdom, He interposed an ethical claim upon men, whereof the sanction was His own sacrifice. Thus the Kingdom succeeds upon the death, in His view, not as an arbitrary miracle, but as connected

with ethical and social revolution in the hearts and lives of men. Such human activity may be assumed to meet with some ineffable and superhuman consummation before the Kingdom is finally established; but the human action, responding to the Cross of Christ, is desired by God as a preliminary means.

We have now explored in some detail the evidences for our Lord's conception of the meaning of His own death. We have attempted to establish four propositions; and if these do actually represent our Lord's thought and intention, the way is now open for us to interpret His words and action. Not that any interpretation of ours can exhaust half the reality. We stand before a huge crisis, involving the heart of God and the destiny of man.

II

THE CROSS OF REVOLUTION

All attempts to treat our Lord's death as a mere "incident," of no essential theological or spiritual significance, must call in question, not only the experience of the Church, already indubitably expressed in the Apostolic letters, but also the strongly attested witness of Jesus Himself. We have observed that the very mode of the initiation of His public ministry indicated a tragic *dénouement;* and that, at any rate, quite early in His career, He assumed that death at the hands of His enemies was to be His lot. We noticed that as soon as He had obtained evidence that His disciples had reached profound conviction as to His Person, He began to teach them definitely that He must die a death of shame, and that He gradually revealed to them the full measure of that shame. Moreover, we have found reason to believe that the death which was to come was regarded by Him as no mere incidence of circumstance, but was accepted in such manner as to become veritably His own act.

To die in those circumstances was His vocation; and thus His death forms one of the great elements of His teaching. Its significance derives from His Person; and the Kingdom, of which He had spoken so frequently and so arrestingly, is now shown to

await the accomplishment of His Passion for its full inauguration in the world. According to the evangelical record, therefore, Jesus believed that He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God"; that He had come to found God's Kingdom upon earth; and that the signal and critical act of foundation would be His own self-immolation in a death of agony, accompanied by circumstances of most acute disgrace and distress.

We know that the suggestion has been made that such a view was possible to Jesus only because He moved in a circle of eschatological ideas which, having their genesis probably in an extra-Jewish source, had made their appearance at some more or less defined point in the history of Hebrew prophecy, had become developed and popularized in later times, had deeply coloured much Jewish literature, and were widespread amongst His own people in the days in which He lived. The appearance of the expected Messiah was to procure, in sudden and miraculous manner, the Kingdom of God, whereof Jerusalem would be the centre, and in which the glory of the chosen people would be established in unprecedented splendour. From Jerusalem, Messiah would reign in righteousness over the earth. Evil would pass away, injustice would be banished, and peace and holiness would maintain a universal sway.

Now, the suggestion is that Jesus somehow, and probably not at the outset of His ministry, came to conceive that He Himself was the Messiah; or, in the terminology of the later apocalyptic literature, Son of Man. Disappointed, in that His discovery

about Himself won no recognition from the national religious authorities, who remained critical and hostile, He sought for some explanation of the delay in the coming of the Kingdom, and found it in the ancient prophecies concerning the Suffering Servant. He concluded that the Kingdom would be revealed only when the wickedness of the present order had reached its climax in the killing of the Son of Man. He thereupon resolved to force the issue with His enemies to the point of His own death, fully believing that this would shortly be followed by His own return upon the clouds of heaven, to reign in power and glory upon the earth. His death would miraculously procure what His life had failed to produce, and God would be compelled, after that enormous and culminating event, to give the desired Kingdom.

It is obvious that this theory can find a certain amount of superficial support in the phrases of the Gospel narratives. We have, indeed, insisted that our Lord did connect the coming of the Kingdom with His own death, and it cannot be denied that He employed eschatological language, or that His followers received the impression that His return in glory would occur at no distant time. But here we have to remember that it is at least justifiable to distinguish between a teacher's purport, and certain questionable impressions received by His hearers. The eschatological language used by our Lord will bear more than one interpretation, but it was the language of the only thought-scheme through which He could have made Himself intelligible to most Jews of that generation. It may fairly be

said that it was no unwise plan, if He left the essential reality of His Person and Work to correct the false emphasis of certain accidental forms which had inevitably accompanied the reception of His teaching in the minds of His disciples. And we must point out that such correction was speedily accomplished in the Church, without the sacrifice of any essential element of Christian faith. Finally, it must be noted that apocalyptic conceptions do enshrine a truth of permanent value—the truth that God, after all, is the chief Actor in the world's history: that God is free, and that although He may wait upon our movement for the accomplishment of His purpose, the final blessing of mankind is His gift, and not merely an achievement of man.

These considerations may serve somewhat to turn the force of those arguments which, discovering eschatological elements in our Lord's utterances, seek to explain that He was obsessed by impossible dreams, and that His death was a fanatical adventure undertaken to procure an entirely arbitrary and miraculous result. But we have said that there was, between His references to His death, and His teaching about the Kingdom which was to follow His death, a link of thought; and this, neglected by some students, is of the utmost importance. For, whereas the older " liberalism " had sought to discover a human Jesus by eliminating all supernatural traits from the record and concentrating upon the ethical teaching, the eschatological school have emphasized the supernatural claims of Jesus in isolation from His ethical message. They have largely failed to observe that between His ethic

and His eschatology there is a profound connection. Thus, while liberalism presents us with the figure of a dull professor, the eschatological school, in its extreme exponents, asks us to accept the figure of a mad Jew.

We have pointed out that on several occasions, the reference to His forthcoming death was followed by strong and stern teaching about ethical self-sacrifice. He urged His followers to "take up the cross" and to "follow" Him. And it is only after He has thus declared that His death must affect the moral life of man, that He utters eschatological predictions about the coming of the Kingdom. We conclude, then, that our Lord, conceiving Himself as of unique significance in the life of mankind, believed that He had come to die a death of shame; and that this action was intended to produce results both ethical and cosmic. The difficult task now arises of attempting to say why that death could be expected to produce those results. That is the central problem of soteriology, reduced to its barest outline. Indeed, so basic is that problem, that even to say it becomes a problem of atonement is partly to provide an answer: for it does at least suggest that the results of Christ's death accrue because the Cross has power to bring Man and God together.

It is necessary here to revert to our starting-point, and to remember that the whole Christian philosophy is grounded and founded in the belief in the reality of action, human and divine. There can be no genuinely Christian thought or faith, in the absence of this belief. The doctrine of the reality

of action, however, implies more than that God is free to act at intervals and upon certain occasions, as in creation or redemption. Indeed, the conception of an occasional activity of a God whose existence is normally static, is incapable of being thought out. The doctrine of divine action implies an essential principle of activity within the divine existence; and this means that action is a reality within God, apart from any relation He may sustain with a created and contingent universe. The obvious deduction is that if we think of God in terms of personality and action, we must also think of Him in terms of society, since only within an eternal society would eternal personal activity be conceivable. An unrelated, undifferentiated unity can have no activity within itself. If within God action is an eternal principle, then within God there are relations. And if God is personal, these must be personal relations; and such a social conception of God as is provided by the Christian doctrine of Holy Trinity is therefore seen to be at least of probable truth, upon philosophical grounds.

We see, then, that God's action in creation is no arbitrary and groundless movement, but is the issue of His own nature. But it also follows that His creation, when it reaches the stage of conscious, spiritual life, must contain the personal-social principle. Not even God can create that which has no ground within His own Being. He cannot create persons out of social relation, or society which is not compounded of personal values. Nor can He create personality and society in which action is not real, though within a created universe the

scope of creaturely action will be finite. Thus, the assertion of a primal activity at the roots of the universe is not consonant with the notion of a universe determined, through and through. If there is an Ultimate Reality within which real action is eternal, it seems reasonable to suppose that real action will appear, at some stage or other, as a characteristic of the created universe.

Christian philosophy declares that real action appears in man, who is personal and social. And real action in a finite creature, distinct from God, cannot be granted without the admission that such action might become opposed to the divine purpose, with results of unspeakable disaster to the finite agent. Here we light upon the fundamental principle for the interpretation of the death of Christ. The Christian view is that mankind, apart from divine aid, is in a condition of desperate danger; and upon no other question does the Faith find itself so widely divergent from certain assumptions of the present day. It is still taken for granted, in many quarters, that man is wholly subject to such evolutionary process as scientific theory declares to have operated in the sub-human world; and it is supposed that there are natural forces inherent within human nature which, though baffled from time to time, are nevertheless capable of overcoming all obstacles and securing man in the kingdom of this world, so that he shall become master of the earth, and even perhaps extend his sway over other planets.

Such a view cannot tolerate the dogma that man's own action has already involved him in irreparable

disaster; but its optimism is secured only at the price of practically denying to man the power to direct his own steps. It is assumed that the effective shaping of his destiny is performed by the operation of those natural laws and forces which have produced him, or by some absolute cause working always and only through such laws and forces. Nevertheless, it is implied that the human race has some special significance in the physical universe: that it has before it an amazing future; and that it may well discover an adaptation to circumstance whereby all its needs will eventually be thoroughly satisfied. It is claimed that there is no need for supernatural religion for the accomplishment of this end, and that the facts of history, together with the achievements of modern discovery and invention, are sufficient to support the hope. The historic failures of our race, and what we call our sins, are said to be mere incidents of a growth which has behind and within it the pressure of a tremendous "urge" of nature.

Now, it has never been agreed what kind of ethical standards and sanctions are to be deduced from such assumptions. It is difficult to see how any can be deduced; and it is safe to say that it is impossible to support the Christian ethic by any such general view of man's condition and destiny as we have described. For the Christian ethic is ultimately based upon God being crucified in His own world, by His own creatures. There could be no other final reason for telling any man to take up his cross. But if our race is being guided by an indefeasible process toward a triumphant mastery of

this world, as its supreme destiny, the Cross of God Incarnate can have no significance. It is merely meaningless. It is well, therefore, that the assumption of a sure human evolution should at least be subjected to close scrutiny, before we decide that Christians have been entirely mistaken in their interpretation of the death of Christ.

In the first place, the Gospel of racial progress in this world as an assured process, and as supplying the whole *motif* and meaning of human existence, contains no message for the individual. If a man living in toil and poverty, and dying in pain and grief, is to be told that the meaning of his poor, burdened days will be found in the ultimate material ease and intellectual sufficiency of the race, and that he himself has no other function than in some obscure manner to subserve that future triumph, he is being told that the race is something in which the individual has no genuine creative participation. But as the race appears to be made up of individuals, all of whom are thus insignificant, it becomes difficult to see the value of this racial success. And when we reflect that there is no scientific guarantee that such racial triumph will be permanent, or that mankind, having come to some climax of mastery in this world, will not then decay in power, or suffer some catastrophic obliteration, the appalling hollowness of this secular " humanism " becomes yet more patent.

Again, it must be remarked that it is very questionable whether the facts of the human past do lend support to the assumption we are discussing. In order to demonstrate that man is entirely governed

by natural evolutionary process, it would be necessary to show first that his whole existence had arisen by an unbroken, uninterrupted development, from sub-human species. But the mode of transition from sub-human to human has never yet been discovered; and the vast and comprehensive theories raised by certain anthropologists upon the flimsiest evidence are now becoming a subject of healthy laughter. The bare fact is that nobody knows what primitive men looked like, how they occupied their time, or what thoughts they carried inside the skulls which are now so ardently discussed.

At all events, while research is now revealing the hitherto unsuspected antiquity of civilization, calm reflection does not assure us that within the period of recorded history man has been controlled by any indefeasible force which could reasonably be described as progressively evolutionary. Because recent generations have witnessed a remarkable advance in scientific knowledge and invention, at a time when the practical exploitation of the world has become the chief preoccupation of man, we too readily assume that this marks an indubitable human advance. We get things out of perspective. Is it quite certain that our age is supreme in poetry, in philosophy, in architecture, music, painting? It looks rather as if man produces, in this direction or in that, sudden outbursts of energy and ability which he fails to maintain. As a matter of fact there is no agreed criterion of progress which can be applied as a test of man's progressiveness.

If we apply the test of the use to which the achievements of any given age are put, we seem in

many respects to show no signs of evolutionary progress beyond the most primitive men of the anthropologist's vision. Not even they could employ scientific knowledge for more inanely destructive purposes than the European nations have done. We have invented wireless telegraphy, but it is possible that Hebrew prophets or Greek orators might have put it to better use. Even in the field of humane pity, the day may come when the economic system, to which we blandly subscribe, and which has created slum-cities and the armies of the unemployed, will seem as little human as the fires of Moloch, and perhaps less excusable.

The argument, however, goes beyond a mere comparison of past and present. The application of the evolutionary hypothesis to the whole life of man is vaguely supposed to provide a ground of optimism. Mr H. G. Wells, for example, has occasionally grown almost sentimental in speaking of the assured glories of the human future. But why anyone should suppose that a process which begins with amœba and turns out species after species in bewildering multiplicity and variety should, of itself, and necessarily, now concentrate for ever upon the development of one species alone, is a little puzzling. If man really is entirely the product of evolution, it seems highly probable that he will be superseded by the process which has made him. There is no scientific ground for declaring that man is the appointed king of the world. He may be an incident. Ultimately, in the whole incomprehensible sum of life, he may be an incident of scarcely more importance than rats or mosquitoes,

and quite as ludicrous as the baboon. Upon the strict evolutionary hypothesis, by which we must understand a theory of purely natural development, the human species is as likely to become a domestic pet of some race of Supermen, as to become the controller of the tides and the ruler of the stars.

And if we are bidden to scout such disloyal notions, and to have faith in the human destiny, this can mean only that there is some invisible purpose which is specially concerned with the human destiny: a purpose other than that evolutionary process from which no such glorious human attainment can be surely deduced. But if we may share with that invisible purpose the hope and intention of finally establishing our race, it is admitted that the essential argument of religion is sound.

Now, it is folly to assert that the development of the purpose of man's existence can be apart from religion, and to base that belief upon man's past, which was crowded with religion. Yet assuredly, out of the history of religion we cannot get the sky-blue optimism of the Humanists. It is certain that as religion developed, it became more deeply fraught with a sense of human malady. From the Olympian gods to the mysteries: from Hinduism to Buddhism: from the Early Hebrew sacrifice, the *zebach*, with its communal fellowship, to the later sacrifice of penitence, the *'olah*—religion passes to a moral pathology. The central line of growth is in the Jewish people, with its fierce self-condemnation by the lips of its greatest sons. And the Christian Faith, which after all is the real, but often

forgotten, root of all modern optimism about the human race, begins by informing every man that he is utterly lost. Nor is this estimate of man's forlorn and dangerous plight entirely confined to Christian theology. Plato wrote *The Laws* because he concluded that men were not, and could not be, good enough for *The Republic*; and outside of Christianity and the societies which it has influenced, there is little enough of lofty praise of man, little enough expectation of a sublime human future.

A wide reading of the world's classical literatures, a knowledge of social history, a practical experience of life, and a steady introspection of one's own heart, do not fortify one in the belief that man is a creature heading straight for a predetermined and worthy goal. He is rather, it seems, very conscious of bewilderment and tragic frustration, and not seldom sickened and ashamed at his own record. The prophet of denunciation is a strange phenomenon, if everything is always as well with us as it can be. And the prophets are not yet extinct. Our platforms are still crowded with them, although the modern prophet is usually occupied in denouncing everyone but his own people or his own party.

It is argued by some that our self-accusation of moral failure is simply due to our sense of not yet having reached our goal: that we are merely conscious of an imperfection which is in reality no more than natural. But upon any theory of naturalism it is extremely difficult to understand this discrepancy between what man sees, and what he does. If his life is governed by natural causes, there is no need for him to see in advance the end which he is destined

to reach. Moreover, the actual consciousness of sin is not an awareness of merely falling short of a given standard, as a man might regret being less than six feet in height. It is not a consciousness of having not yet arrived. It is not the consciousness of being a loser in a battle. It is a man's knowledge of himself as a deserter. And if man is a deserter (and unless his action is rigidly determined by causes beyond his control, he is a creature who may be a deserter) then his history is a disastrous story and his path is haunted by perils.

It is, of course, possible to say that all confession of sin is morbid. But it is at least equally reasonable to assert that such a charge is itself morbid and eccentric: that the sceptical critic of St Augustine and John Bunyan is suffering from a conscience seared as with a hot iron: that he is not quite "all there"; and that if he were a little less abnormal, he would go down upon his knees in the dust and own himself a greater sinner than either. For it remains always true, upon the very face of things, that unless man is an automaton, he is very much of a scoundrel.

One need not deny the splendour of human achievements, the pathetic heroism, the daily virtues of men, in order to allege that the human effort is crippled and comes ever to defeat. One need not deny that men find a little, flickering flame of happiness in this world, in order to point out the truth that they live under a shadow of great uncertainty. History is full of the decline and fall of cultures, new starts that lead nowhere, moods of decadence and pessimism; and somehow in this world of nature

the spirit of man remains thirsty, unsatisfied, disappointed. Somehow he is a misfit in this world. And we need not deny that he has lovable qualities, if we declare in all seriousness that it is written upon his brow and in his heart that he is not what God meant him to be.

Certainly, beyond his occasional generosity and sporadic loyalty, he has a very ugly side; and when he shows it, he suggests not a beast, but something more wildly unnatural—something which he himself has agreed to call a devil. He has been cruel, treacherous, lustful. His cupidity and stupidity have perverted the best gifts of his marvellous brain. He has been slothful, dull and blind. In his best moments he has been shamed into a strange and significant admission—the admission of his *inhumanity*. This, from humankind, is worth many volumes of theology in proof of the human consciousness of a vital distortion; and it implies always opposition to, and alienation from, a transcendent reality—a situation unnatural, tragic, disgraceful. And no person who admits this inordinate and monstrous condition of his race is in a position to question the necessity of a supernatural irruption within that race's history, if the world is to be saved from complete and final failure. If he admits that real action in man has resulted in the distortion of personal-social life, so that persons are the slaves of *things* and society is but a confused external association for securing *things*, he must admit the need of new action, proceeding from that Infinite Society of Persons we call God, Who is the source of all activity. And such new action,

revealing in this wandering and benighted world the heart of Reality, will be Revolution.

The Christian view is that man, a creature personal and social, and capable of real, though finite, action, and thus intended to live within finite modes the personal-social life of God, has actually departed from the very purpose of his existence, and has produced a cosmic tragedy for which angels might well weep. And the Christian Faith declares that Jesus of Nazareth was God Incarnate, entering this human race for its salvation, to produce within man's personal and social life a profoundly altered directivity, a revolution of motive. And He came to die, because upon this planet earth and amongst the sons of men only the death of God could express the principle of the divine life. For such creatures to be confronted with God, meant that God would be murdered. But for God to be confronted with man's sin, meant His enduring the depths of agony and humiliation. That is what God is. That is the truly Personal-Social, face to face with selfishness, which is the denial of the social implication of selfhood. It is this unnatural orientation of will which hampers all human effort, strains all social ties, mars all attainments, cripples all souls. The spiritual coherence of personality was lost: the spiritual cohesion of society was broken; and only the birth, within humanity, of the very life of God, could give restoration. And in this world, the divine life could be born only to die. It was born an outcast, cradled in a manger; and the shadow of the Cross overhung all its earthly days.

Our argument is that the actual course of our

Lord's ministry and teaching are intelligible only upon the belief that He knew Himself to be the world's Saviour, and that He was well aware that such vocation of Saviourhood must involve His death at the hands of men. No lesser explanation can account for *all* the elements in His character and Gospel. He has come to found a Kingdom, but it is a Kingdom which presupposes the infinite value of the soul. Here is an emphatic assertion that the rehabilitation of true personal-social life is His aim; and that personal-social life is of the very nature of ultimate Reality. Of this Kingdom He is Lord; and He is so completely Lord of each soul that what is done to any man is done to Him. He presents Himself, then, as the appearance, within the race of man, of that Eternal Reality which sustains man's life and supplies it with meaning.

As soon as His followers have begun to grasp the truth about Him, He announces clearly what had previously been but dimly adumbrated, that the Kingdom can come in this world only upon the basis of a terrific deed of His doing. It will come, however, not by any unrelated, staggering miracle, but only as men, coming into communion of heart and will with Him, are identified with the motive of His own forthcoming act, and translate it into the terms of human activity in this world. They must take up their cross, and follow Him.

Now, this view involves the belief that what happened in Palestine more than nineteen hundred years ago, was the introduction of the very life of the Holy Trinity, the ultimate personal-social Reality, into the broken life of mankind. The

Eternal Son of God retains His communion within God, but now sustains that communion also from within humanity, and thus becomes, in His historic incarnation, a new foundation of man's life. Such a belief may seem fantastic, if the tragic situation of this world be disregarded. Or it may seem to suppose an enormous disproportion, unless it be remembered that our life is intended to share, under finite modes, that actual spiritual communion which is the life of God. If man, the human race, is made in the image of God, it is not hopelessly absurd to suppose that God might extend His own life within the life of man. Or it may seem strange that so tremendous an undertaking should come to have the appearance of a brief incident, now far remote in the speeding centuries. But if God enters our life, He must enter under finite modes and upon human terms. His actual entrance took place after the lapse of vast periods of civilization, when mighty empires had come to dust, and great cultures were perished. It was, indeed, comparatively a recent event, as we look back upon the long human story.

At all events, there is no other person who is at this moment raising problems so searching and challenging as Jesus Christ is raising. There is no other person, no other message, no other death, so ardently discussed as His Person, Message and Death are discussed. And there stands His Church, strange and unique amongst all institutions; and now, in an age of secularism, when the world had half-forgotten it, revealing yet once more signs of stirring life. And it has never abandoned its claim that it is the direct and necessary issue of a

movement, into this world, of the very life of the Eternal Fellowship of God.

Whatever we may think of it, however, there is no doubt that our Lord believed that He had come to transform the human race, and to redirect its whole activity. His teaching foreshadowed the nature of the transformation; but His death was to secure that transformation. The Kingdom was to be built upon the sacrifice of God. And at this point we may pause to reflect upon the problem we encountered in our study of His own words and deeds toward the close of His ministry. Having spoken so much of His death, having treated it, in prospect, as His own creative act, nevertheless at the penultimate stage, in the Garden of Gethsemane, He appeared to flinch from the final conflict. But we have suggested that this Agony provides the full revelation of our Lord's whole attitude to the Cross, and provides an insight into the appalling implications of that energy of resolve which had brought Him to Jerusalem. It is in the dark Garden that we find light upon the profoundly revolutionary character of His subsequent sacrifice.

If Jesus Christ was no more than a prophet, all that can be said is that many other people have faced physical death without any such appearance of shrinking as He displayed. If His death was but an incident in the life of a good man, then, considering His own teaching about the fatherly care of God, it must be said that He at length saw this incident entirely out of proportion. If, on the other hand, He was a fanatic, obsessed with wild notions about the glorious effects of His death, it

is strange, not only that He should have flinched from it, but that He should have shown that quiet sadness which is the special mark of those hours. We should have expected either a frantic exaltation, or a complete and chaotic collapse.

But there are two considerations which compel us to reject either the "natural" or the "eschatological" conception of our Lord's view of His death. One is, that upon either of these explanations, while He was struggling in Gethsemane, and apparently recoiling in horror from what was to come, He might easily have been making His escape. Either a moralist or a fanatic, cured of his gospel or his dreams by the proximity of shocking torture, would naturally have sought to evade the issue by leaving Jerusalem; and apparently there was no human reason why our Lord should not have done this. He "flinched" before, and not after, He was in the hands of His enemies. And secondly, we must observe that a moral breakdown such as would produce a panic fear of pain and death, would be accompanied by loss of faith and certainty about God—about the reality of the invisible. But that precisely is what did *not* happen with Jesus. He is now, in the Garden, as ever, intimately in counsel with His Father. He seeks deliverance not merely from the designs of wicked men, but from the urgent will of God. And He seeks deliverance, apparently, not for His own sake; for what He desires, at all costs, is that the will of God shall be done.

The problem seems insoluble upon any hypothesis but one, namely that our Lord, the Eternal

Son of God incarnate, standing ever within the blessed community of the Holy Trinity, was become the means and occasion whereby that Eternal Life was to be placed under the heel of sinful man. He, the incarnation of Social Will, was now to serve the ends of that Will by yielding it into the hands of the unsocial. He who was Eternal Person, dwelling in Eternal love, was to submit Personality to the arbitrament of blatant force, and be smashed upon a wooden Cross. He was to be the weapon of Love's unprecedented adventure—that the ultimate Good should present itself to be spit upon by evil. He was to be the means of the Creator's submission to His creatures. In Him, the sacred seat of life and love was to be defiled by the coarse hands of death and hate. Loyalty to the Infinite Society which is God, pity for the needs of men, broke His great heart, and He sweated drops of blood. He, God and Man, was to be the Victim of God's love and man's hate. In Him the Eternal love was to be deeply insulted. In Him the Holy God was to be gibbeted as a criminal. In Him, the pure communion of the Holy Trinity was to become involved in the sordid selfishness and brutality of this world, and to be crushed by them.

Was this His dread ordeal? Was this the dreadful cup? It was the chalice of a mighty revolution, in which God Almighty, in personal presence, was to show Himself God by going like a sheep to the slaughter. And if this be truth, we see why, all along, He had spoken and acted as though His death were an enormous adventure, a mighty deed. The Agony of Gethsemane reveals, in an unearthly

light, the Cross as a Revolution, inaugurated within the heart of the Everlasting: the supreme, towering event of time, the foundation of a new world. So it was viewed by our Lord throughout His earthly sojourn. In Him, man will lay hands upon His Maker. The effects of sin will at last fall even upon the Most High God. But in that ineffable submission of God to man, of Good to evil, of Eternity to time, God will contradict the world for ever, reduce its pride to nothing, and utterly change the very meaning and mode of the lives of men through all the coming ages.

This revolution consists in expressing toward a world of distorted activity the everlasting Spring and Source of action, which is the Love of God's own Triune Being. This love is set down in human history, where it is answered, not as in the Heavenly Society, with love, but with hatred and mockery. And if we have rightly interpreted our Lord's meaning, His deed had for its definite purpose the reconstruction of human life. It was intended to effect more than a change in man's *status* in the eyes of God, though as a matter of moral and theological truth it did so affect man's status. Mankind, with the Son of God dead in its midst, is in a different cosmic relation from mankind merely astray from God. Moreover, it is practically true, that no man who believes that it was the Son of God who died at Calvary, can ever dream of seeking God's pardon apart from that act and fact. If Jesus was the personal instrument, and even the victim, of God's great love, we have to present Him as the Sacrifice of our penitence,

and His torn body and broken heart are our way to the Father. He is indeed our God-given shield from the wrath of God. It is not that we overlook all those profound depths in the mystery of the Cross, if our present purpose requires us to emphasize another side of truth.

Reconciliation with God at the Cross means that we, as well as God, must come to the Cross. Individually and socially we must seek the Kingdom of the Cross, and our whole human endeavour and the entire structure of our human relations are to express this achieved communion in sacrifice. Our daily traffic in this world must become a sharing of the life of God, as Christ crucified has shown it to us. No soul wins heaven passively, merely because Christ died. No Kingdom comes on earth, merely because the Messiah has suffered. His followers must follow Him, each bearing his cross, and man passes to blessedness by crucifixion of spirit.

This involves, in the first place, for the individual, the complete abandonment of self-will as the moving principle of his action. He sees himself as such a creature as God can save only through blood and agony, and his pride is a thing to be renounced as an obscenity in the universe. He knows that only by coming into alignment with the revolutionary deed of God can he be delivered from perdition. Apart from that one Act, he must indeed be lost; for only the stooping of the Highest can reach him, and there is but one Highest. And that Act is a call from Ultimate Reality to his own personal being. Unless he bring a living response, its effect will be, not to save him, but to plunge him into deeper condemna-

tion. Therefore he has now to live the will of God, as that will has displayed itself in condescending, suffering love. He has to live in and for communion at all costs, since he is called home to the Foundation of all society. All the greed of this world, all the search for the glory of wealth and power, the whole motive of self-interest and self-advancement, appear now in their real nature as a vast and complicated disloyalty. All his labour of hand or brain must be a self-offering; and if he possess anything, he must employ it, not for his own pride's satisfaction, but sacrificially, for the divine-human commonwealth. And all he may ever ask from this world's material resources is such sufficiency as shall sustain him in this sacrificial task. If that sufficiency be not obtainable without his forcing others into hunger and want, he must volunteer for hunger and want, and go, like St Francis, singing upon his way. It is precisely because it demands this change of heart, this reversal of will, this new mode of action; because it declares that here, and not in lust and possession and conquest, is true joy, that the death of Christ is the one truly revolutionary event that ever happened in the world.

It requires that society shall be, not a grudging compromise of "rights," and not a mere external association of men for the limited purpose of securing such material necessities as are more easily produced by some kind of association; a make-believe of co-operation, riven by rival interests and constantly menaced by strife born of fear and injustice; but a consolidation of hearts in a common, sacrificial endeavour to realize the social life of God

in the common good of man. Hence it follows that the Cross upholds a revolutionary sanction against all privilege, all sectional and competitive endeavour, and condemns entirely the construction of society upon a basis of private greed. And moreover, it is implied that since Christ died for all men, no group of men, no single corporation of culture and tradition, is entitled to maintain, against other groups or corporations, any other standard than that of divine sacrifice. This is the fundamental condemnation of war, whether of nations or classes, whether by military or economic weapons. The divine method has appeared, and all others are obsolete. And this means that a civilization of glaring inequalities, ostentatious display, shrieking advertisement, depending upon fleets and armies and ready at any moment to assert its right to exist by wholesale bloodshed, is *not* the civilization of the Cross. For there is nothing worthy of the name of Christian which has not built the Cross into its very heart.

These conclusions may seem fantastic enough, in the modern world. But a reasonable judgment may trust that the modern world itself is a fantasia, and no true expression of the purpose of human existence. The Christian Faith asserts that, outside the Kingdom of the Cross, mankind is in deep and deadly danger, from which not all its invention and discovery may deliver it. They may, indeed, only hasten a terrible climax. The entrance of God into our race carried no element of determinism, and thus it seems possible that man may eventually reject the Cross, and seek his own doom in some vast, race-destroying madness of pride, or

hate, or self-love. He may obliterate himself at once in a greater world-war; or he may wipe out his future by economic strife. We who have lived through a world-war, and read our newspapers day by day, know that this is no morbid fancy.

And yet our Lord seems never to have contemplated the total failure of His work. He not only witnessed to a Society of the Cross, He not only spoke of a Kingdom: He claimed to be founding that Society and that Kingdom. If He did, and if it yet remains in the world, there is a heavy onus upon it in these days. And if the Church is veritably that Society and Kingdom, or contains the principle of the Kingdom in the central Sacrament, then upon the Church rests the hope of the world—a hope which can be fulfilled only when men shall see in her something of unearthly courage, and hear from her lips the authentic note of the divine Revolution.

PART II

THE INCIDENCE OF THE PASSION

I saw the Son of God go by
  Crowned with the crown of thorn.
" Was It not finished, Lord ? " I said,
  " And all the anguish borne ? "

He turned on me His awful eyes :
  " Hast thou not understood ?
Lo ! Every soul is Calvary,
  And every sin a Rood."

—Rachel Annand Taylor.

I

THE BETRAYAL OF GOD

Our Lord predicted not only His death and its humiliating circumstances, but foretold also that He would pass into the hands of His enemies by means of a betrayal. This assertion is attributed to Him by all the Synoptic narratives. Apparently it was made very shortly after the Transfiguration, which took place, according to Matthew and Mark six days, and according to Luke "about an eight days" after St Peter's confession of faith at Cæsarea Philippi. This confession, as we know, had been followed by the first prediction of the Passion. And now, a little later, and while they were yet in Galilee, it is explained by Jesus to His disciples that the tragedy is to be made possible by an act of treachery, and He speaks as though this were already certain, and not merely a possibility.

The opinion of Grotius, that the word παραδίδωμι here used, refers to the giving up of the Son by the Father, may seem to derive force from the fact that our Lord, according to St Mark, speaks as though the thing were already done; but it cannot be substantiated. The present tense in Mark is clearly stylistic; and Matthew and Luke imply that the deed, whatever its nature, awaits accomplishment. The Authorized Version translates the word "betrayed"

in Matthew, and "delivered" in the parallels in Mark and Luke. The Revised Version corrects this inconsistency and gives "delivered" in each instance. But the word may be accurately translated "betrayed," and there can be little doubt that the intention of the parallel passages is to indicate a traitorous delivery by human agency. Nor, as we reflect upon the situation of the Son of God in this world, can we wonder that He was betrayed. Rather it would seem that this was a most likely issue, where human creatures, accustomed to seek their own ends, had now the Incarnate God in their keeping. This situation He accepted, making no effort to extricate Himself.

It was not surprising that out of twelve associates, there should be at least one who considered how best he could turn that situation to his own purposes. That was precisely what self-centred human action had been doing with the divine act of creation; and it was probable enough that even amongst those to whom was being revealed the divine act of redemption, there would be some who would regard even this as capital which might bear tangible interest for themselves. If some wanted to secure the first places in the Kingdom, another, perhaps a little more crafty, and certainly more capable of keeping his own counsel and acting upon his own initiative, might easily see in his association with Jesus a means of realizing his own particular desires, and actually give effect to his discovery. What was the particular purpose of Judas Iscariot is a question which has provoked long and fascinating discussion, and we cannot omit it from our consideration. But the

main and central feature of his behaviour was that he sought his own gratification, and chose for his instrument the Eternal Son of God. It is by no means certain that his deed stands within its own category as a thing apart. Much of human life is a faithful Imitation of Judas.

Some find the Betrayal of Jesus Christ a difficult problem in theodicy. The dilemma is proposed to us: When our Lord called Judas to be a disciple, He either knew, or He did not know, that he would betray Him. If He did not know, what are we to think of His insight into human character? If He did know, He facilitated this wretched man's sin. But the dilemma is only a special instance of the wider problem of divine action, by creating, making evil possible. All the disciples, like other men, had possibilities of evil, because they were free agents. Our Lord, in calling any man to discipleship, calls him, no doubt, to the *possibility* of sins other, and even greater, than he has ever committed before. But the divine foreknowledge of all possible alternatives of human action does not imply the predetermination of any particular action.

Two suggestions, at any rate, must be dismissed. The first is that the action of Judas was a mechanically predestined means for securing the death of Christ, which was necessary for the salvation of men. The Gnostics, indeed, held that Judas, attaining higher knowledge than the other disciples, discerned the need for Christ's death, and duly arranged for it to happen; and even this wild speculation is more worthy of consideration than the notion that God arranged for it to happen by using

Judas, in his sin, as an unconscious instrument. But the whole conception of Iscariot as the chosen implement, whether conscious or unconscious, of a divine plan, is repugnant to our sense of reality. The simple truth is that any member of a blind and selfish race might turn a Judas; and it was highly probable that sooner or later, in a world where all holy causes have their market value, God Himself would be sold.

The second suggestion is that there was no betrayal. The primitive Christian society, it is supposed, felt it necessary to explain how the Saviour had been so easily caught. Judas, after the crucifixion, had taken himself off to his home in the south; and it was easy to make him the scapegoat. Schmiedel regards this as a reasonable hypothesis, and it is said to relieve us from the pressure of the above dilemma. It might, perhaps, seem reasonable, could we persuade ourselves that the Apostles, after the crucifixion and resurrection, were still thinking of Jesus as a leader of political revolution and were unable to account for His defeat—and if we could imagine that they would allow the development of a gross libel upon an innocent man. The moral standards of the Apostolic community, in the opinion of some eminent critics, were not even decent, seeing that it thoroughly distorted evidence; and its intellect was presumably that of a school for mentally deficients. But, after all, the Apostles built up the Church which has endured for two thousand years; and some critics cannot build even a destructive theory which will last for more than a fortnight.

The immense strength of the tradition of the betrayal in the Gospel narratives, and the very real horror of the deed which is everywhere manifested, mark that deed as an indubitable fact, whatever may be its interpretation. The Synoptics cannot even mention the name of Judas Iscariot in the list of the Twelve, without hastening to inform us that it was he who betrayed the Lord. If it is certain that Jesus Christ was crucified, it is also certain that Judas Iscariot utterly disgraced himself, in the eyes of his fellow-disciples, in connection with that death.

No very clear illumination of the course of this man's thought and intention is to be gained from the few details which are known, or may be surely deduced, from the narratives. Grotius thought that the name Ισκαριώτης meant "the man of Issachar," but most modern scholars take it to be a Greek rendering of the Hebrew Ish Keriyoth, "the man of Kerioth"; and some MSS. of Mark preserve the form Ισκαριώθ. Schmiedel mentions a conjecture that the name was really Ἰεριχωτής, the man of Jericho, and thinks it plausible; though why a place-name so easily remembered should be so consistently forgotten, he does not explain. The weight of opinion is that Judas came from Kerioth, a town in Southern Judea; and this fact alone might possibly be sufficient to produce a certain psychological effect upon him in the circle of the disciples, for it would mean that he alone of the Twelve was not a Galilean. It is impossible to do much more than guess, but it seems not altogether unlikely that he was always somewhat apart from the rest, never completely assimilated. Perhaps his

strangerhood kept him, from the first, a little aloof, allowing him to think his own thoughts and to keep his own counsel.

The motives that first led him to approach Jesus must remain obscure; but if, as has sometimes been alleged, Southern Judea was at that time a hotbed of revolutionary ideas and political disaffection, he may well have been disposed to lend a ready ear to any preacher of a new Kingdom. But there really is no need to attribute to Judas any other political philosophy, or any other religious outlook, than was possessed by the other disciples. They conceived a visible Kingdom, speedily to be established, in which they themselves might occupy high places, and in all likelihood he shared their anticipations. It may be that he was of different temper and mental type from them, in that, accepting the same ideas, his reaction was more swift and positive; but into the precise nature of his subsequent doings we shall presently inquire.

We have to notice that a stage was reached when a rift, probably long since observed by Jesus, showed itself openly. Matthew (xxvi. 14-16) and Mark (xiv. 10, 11) record that it was immediately after the incident in the house of Simon the leper at Bethany, where there had occurred the beautiful deed of the woman with the alabaster box of ointment, that Judas went to the priests. St Luke, it is true, disconnects the two events (if the story in Luke vii. 36-50, refers to the same occasion and the same woman); but if his story is a parallel of that in Matthew and Mark, the only conclusion must be that the narrative in Luke is here confused, for

the Fourth Gospel (xii. 1-8) throws an interesting sidelight upon the whole situation. The identification of this story with that of the Synoptics, and specially with Luke's version, raises questions which need not detain us here; but if the identification is made, the Fourth Gospel shows that Judas' approach to the priests had been immediately preceded by something like an altercation between the disciple and his Master.

The question as to whether, and how far, our Lord's remark, reported by Matthew, Mark and John, that the woman had poured out the ointment upon Him "for His burial," affected Judas' decision, will concern us presently. The point at the moment is that Judas was in a frame of mind in which he was ready to argue with Jesus, and to find fault. And it was at this time that he went to the priests. The Fourth Gospel omits this; but St Luke preserves the record that it was indeed at the coming of the Feast of the Passover, that the offer of betrayal was made "to the chief priests and captains." And Matthew, Mark and John agree that the incident of the alabaster box occurred precisely at this period. We thus have what is really a consensus of evidence, that, immediately before his first act of betrayal, Judas was in a mood of criticism which he failed to conceal.

The Fourth Gospel adds to the story a very ugly assertion. It finds the ground of Judas' criticism, not in his ostensible care for the poor, but in his desire to have the poor-fund augmented in order that his own peculations might be more profitable. The charge is roundly made, that he was a thief.

Now, this assertion, unsupported by the Synoptics, is naturally suspected by many scholars. It looks like a piece of spite against the hated traitor. And Schmiedel has proposed an emendation of the text which would entirely eliminate the charge. He suggests that the words, *ὅτι κλέπτης ἦν καὶ τὸ γλωσσόκομον ἔχων τα βαλλόμενα ἐβάσταζεν* (because he was a thief and having the bag took away what was put therein), should rightly be, *ὅτι χαλεπὸς ἦν καὶ τὸ κοινὸν βαλλάντιον ἐβάσταζε* (because he was a harsh man and used to carry the common purse). The suggestion seems arbitrary, and gratuitously invests Judas with the character of "harshness."

Now, if the pilfering was a fact, it might be such a fact as would be known only to the inner circle of the Twelve. If St Peter had chosen to conceal it, or merely never saw occasion to mention it, its absence from Mark may be accounted for. St Matthew, apparently, was not a member of the inner circle, and possibly knew nothing of the unpleasant fact. St Luke may never have heard of it. The note we possess may come directly from the memory of St John. But whether in the received text, or in Schmiedel's emendation, we have an unsympathetic portrait of Judas, indicating that he was then, though treasurer of the little company, in some manner out of touch with them, and was, if not a rogue, at any rate a man known to be tight-fisted and one who, as we say, would "play his own hand."

It was, then, from such a psychological situation that the man who was to betray the Lord proceeded to his task. But the situation as we have examined

it cannot be said to disclose a motive sufficiently strong to prompt Judas to the course which he actually pursued. The indications given might prepare us for a breach between him and the disciple-circle. We should not be surprised if this man had "walked no more with Jesus." What is difficult is to discover exactly how he became involved in treachery so black and tragedy so shattering.

The variety of the theories put forward to account for his action witnesses to the obscurity of the problem. Of the four Gospel narratives, two only, Luke and John, attempt to account for his behaviour, and their opinion is simply that he was tempted by the devil. And so, no doubt, he was; but this does not greatly enlighten us, for the devil's method of temptation is to provide us with motives which present a specious appearance of worth. And what we want to know is just how Judas viewed his own doings. It has been suggested that he was mad; but this will not do. Our Lord certainly did not accept a lunatic as one of His twelve disciples; and at what subsequent stage, and from what cause, did the mental breakdown occur? There is not the slightest suggestion in the narrative that Judas was other than completely sane; at any rate until that final revulsion of feeling which carried him to self-destruction.

The theory has been offered, in somewhat different forms, by De Quincey, Archbishop Whately, and others, that Judas was really attempting to place in the way of his Lord an opportunity of manifesting His supernatural power, and of seizing the Kingdom. He did not believe that Jesus would

ever submit to arrest, and expected that when confronted with the final alternative of complete ignominy or triumphant self-assertion, He would certainly choose the latter and at once assume His Messianic glory. Paulus thought that Judas was reckoning on the multitude rising, should the attempt to arrest Jesus actually be made, and that his Lord would find Himself thus compelled to choose between deserting the people and leading them to the desired consummation of the Kingdom of God. These suggestions obviously purport to vindicate the intention, if not the wisdom, of Judas; but they do not explain how he proposed to justify his presence at the head of the band which did eventually come to make the arrest. Neander introduced another consideration. He conceived that Judas intended, not to provide Jesus with an opportunity, but to apply to Him a test, and to satisfy himself, once for all, as to whether He was, or was not, the Messiah. This suggestion appears to be more in keeping with the situation as we have seen it.

But it cannot be said that any of these theories seriously disturbed the accustomed judgment, which regarded the traitor merely as a traitor, and his motive as either fussy ambition, or mere miserly avarice, or a combination of both. According to this view, Judas perceived that the cause of Jesus was come to a critical pass. Enmity against Him was strong and bitter in the most powerful quarters, and the Lord Himself, at Bethany, had recently spoken of His burial as if it were shortly to happen. Judas merely left a sinking ship, upon the most

advantageous terms he could command. He preferred thirty pieces of silver to loyalty to a doomed leader. Avarice, according to St John, had made him a thief, and now, coupled with an itch to be upon the winning side, it made him a renegade.

This is a plausible account, if we can persuade ourselves that the case of our Lord was, humanly speaking, growing desperate; and if we can believe that Judas was suddenly startled into a panic by what Jesus said about His burial. But, as we shall see later, neither of these assumptions may be made without strong qualifications. The account is plausible, too, if we can receive the notion of this man deliberately performing so vast and heinous wickedness for so paltry a reward. It is not an impossible notion. But if he was afraid of remaining longer in company with a lost cause, there was nothing to prevent him quietly withdrawing to his own home. And probably there will always be some who will feel that the customary, traditional view of Judas is a little superficial, and that there are deeper depths in his story.

This opinion has received brilliant expression, and an alternative explanation has been suggested, in our own generation, by Schweitzer, who argues at length that what Judas betrayed to the priests was the " Messianic secret." There is a problem, not easily solved upon the common theory, as to why the priests made no determined attempt to take Jesus, until after they had received the visit of Judas. It seems scarcely sufficient to say that they needed information as to the most convenient time for making an arrest. It is probably true, as

the Fourth Gospel indicates, that Jesus had many friends in Jerusalem who had come up for the feast, and that the multitude were favourably disposed toward Him, so that an attempt to arrest Him openly would have provoked a riot. But if they had definitely decided to make the arrest, a little efficient spying would have provided them with all the necessary knowledge of His movements. He was appearing day by day in public, and could easily have been "shadowed."[1] Therefore, it is urged, Judas' information must have provided more than a means of arrest; it must have given to the priests a ground for the arrest. And seeing that the question asked of Jesus, at the examination before Caiaphas, directly concerned His profession of Messiahship, it is concluded that the priests had at length taken action because someone, presumably Judas, had given them evidence that He had made the claim.

A difficulty here is that the Synoptics all aver that *after* Judas had been to the priests, he *sought opportunity* to betray Jesus (Matt. xxvi. 16; Mark xiv. 11; Luke xxii. 6). This seems to mean that he first offered to deliver Jesus into their hands, and then set to work to fulfil his contract, and that his visit to the priests was for the purpose of offering to reveal the Lord's whereabouts. If the betrayal was the revealing of the "Messianic secret," that act was completed when the revelation had been made. The priests might then do all that was

[1] The report of the chief priests and Pharisees asking for information as to the whereabouts of Jesus (John xi. 55-57) refers to a time when He was absent from Jerusalem.

necessary. But the narratives declare that Judas was actually present at the capture, guiding the band which was to take the prisoner, and identifying Him with a kiss. It is not impossible, however, that having betrayed the "Messianic secret," and having thus provided the priests with a lever for action, he agreed also to facilitate the arrest, and that His betrayal was thus a twofold treachery.

The main question to be settled is: Was there any "secret" to betray? Had our Lord so carefully concealed His claim to Messiahship, that while it might be suspected by the authorities, they lacked direct evidence of it? On the occasion of St Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi, He had certainly urged secrecy upon His disciples. Mark and Luke record that "he threatened them," "spoke menacingly" (Mark viii. 30; Luke ix. 21); for ἐπετίμησεν, is a word of emphatic meaning, and St Luke's phrase, ἐπιτιμήσας αὐτοῖς παρήγγειλεν, is particularly strong, and may be translated, "warning them seriously, he commanded them"—to tell no man that he was the Christ. St Matthew appears to have a milder expression, διεστείλατο (Matt. xvi. 20), which might mean that He "advised" them to tell no man. But Westcott and Hort, following some MSS., have restored ἐπετίμησεν here. It seems then that our Lord strictly forbade them to inform anyone that He was the Christ.

But the Fourth Gospel records an incident in which our Lord Himself is said to have conveyed the information to a stranger (John ix. 35-37). A man blind from his birth had been cured on the

Sabbath day, and the Pharisees argued that Jesus was not "of God," because He "kept not the Sabbath." The upshot was that the man was cast out of the synagogue—excommunicated; and when Jesus heard of this, He found him and asked him, according to the MSS. followed by our versions: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" But Tischendorf, and Westcott and Hort, following other MSS., give the question: "Dost thou believe on the Son of Man?" And the question is followed by our Lord's explanation that He, to whom the man is speaking, is that Person. Thus, to a blind man, opening his eyes for the first time, Jesus, the first person he had ever seen, explains that He is the Son of God, or the Son of Man: in any case, that He is the Messiah. There is a pathetic beauty in this incident; and it is possible that from this man the story may have spread, that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. Or, the incident may suggest that while He forbade His disciples to announce His claim, He Himself announced it to chosen individuals. And according to the Fourth Gospel, He had already declared to the Jews: "Before Abraham was, I am." At all events, we find them at the Feast of the Dedication, coming to Him with the direct demand: "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly" (John x. 22-end). This seems to indicate that there were certain known reasons for supposing that Jesus had made this claim, but that no public and definite assertion had been heard from His lips,[1] such as would compel official action.

[1] See John vii. 10-end. This passage reports a considerable popular discussion of the question.

The truth would appear to be that there was a popular assumption that He wished to be regarded as the Messiah, and that the people had some vague, rough-and-ready evidences of this; but that the proofs were not sufficiently detailed and formal to enable the authorities to take action against Him. Hence there probably was room for a betrayal of some such clear proof upon the part of Judas—though we cannot be quite sure, even of this. It will be seen that the difficulties in the way of understanding the *nature* of the betrayal, of deciding exactly what service Judas rendered the Jewish authorities, are numerous and complex. Many first-rate scholars remain unconvinced by Schweitzer's arguments. But there is still to be discussed the question of the *motive* of the betrayal; and that problem confronts us whether we suppose that Judas sold the "Messianic secret," or that he merely bargained to facilitate an arrest. Why did he approach the priests at all?

The theory that Judas was no ordinary traitor, but rather a romantic adventurer developing bold and dramatic schemes, has been adopted by certain scholars of the "eschatological" school. This view supposes that Judas, filled with the eschatological expectations aroused by Jesus and shared by Him, simply took his own course in providing the occasion for their realization. Judas may be said to have decided to take Jesus under his management; and, playing upon the animosity of the priests, hoped to bring off a great *coup*. The objection that he actually took money for his work, and that St Matthew records that he went to the

priests asking how much they would give him for his services, is dismissed with the explanation that it was necessary for his purposes that he should *look* like a common informer. What he meant to do was to make sure that such a crisis should arise, without more delay, as would compel the manifestation of the Apocalyptic Kingdom. He was the ambitious mind, seeking to get his hand upon the rudder of circumstance.

For this view, it is to be said that it avoids attributing to Judas a pessimism about the future of Jesus and His cause, which seems an inevitable accompaniment of the customary explanation, but is not borne out by the narratives. It is true that he went to the priests immediately after the scene at Bethany, when Jesus had spoken of His burial. But Jesus had frequently predicted His death, and had said that it would occur in circumstances of deep humiliation. It was St Peter who was disposed to protest most strongly against such a prospect, and Judas, who could be critical when he wished, is not reported to have been specially critical of this. And further, it is by no means certain that our Lord's situation would seem, at the time of the Bethany incident, to be of desperate complexion, as the disciples viewed it.

Comparison of the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel (which at this stage certainly demands the most respectful consideration as historical evidence), makes it highly probable that while the enmity of the authorities was deep-seated and bitter, the enthusiasm of the people was conspicuous. John places the triumphal entry *after* the incident at

Bethany, and reports that the Pharisees realized their impotence in face of the popular support given to Jesus. Thus, whatever Judas was doing, upon this view he was not leaving a sinking ship; and this makes it possible that he had deeper and more far-reaching schemes than giving away the place and time where an arrest could most conveniently be made. Perhaps, jealous and ambitious, he intended to show the other disciples that he was the strong and active man who could bring the uncertain situation to a tremendous issue.

And yet, after all, one is inclined to feel that all such speculation is in the air. Judas may have sold the "Messianic secret" for some wild dream of his own. But his presence in the Garden with the servants of the enemy is not easy to account for. We do not know enough about him to be sure that he was the kind of man to undertake to arrange the stage, and call up the figures, for the final apocalyptic drama. There is no direct evidence for this view of Judas; but there is a piece of evidence that he was capable of an ordinary dirty job. St John, we take it, knew him for a thief. Thus the nature, and the psychological causes, of his act of betrayal, alike remain doubtful.

It is just this doubt about these particular issues which allows us to deal with his whole course of action as typical of much human treatment of Christ—treatment arising from the nature of the divine-human situation as we have conceived it in our previous studies. For it matters little that we cannot be certain what Judas betrayed, or why he acted as he did. There is a deposit of most signi-

ficant certainty precipitated from all our discussion, and it is this:

A human self sought to divert the redemptive action of God to its own ends. Finite activity sought to *employ* the divine. A man attempted to make Jesus Christ, Incarnate God, his instrument —the means of reaching an end of his own. And he could do this, because of his position as an accepted disciple. That is the essence of the betrayal; and as we shall now observe, that is what men have been doing with Christ ever since. Man's selfish action had betrayed God's creative love, in that it had distorted all the God-given powers of personality and all the material means of life, to ends which opposed and hampered the creative intention. And it was to be expected that God's love in redemption would meet with similar treatment, and that the very appearance of the everlasting Giver would present itself to someone as an opportunity for profit-mongering.

Probably a satisfying psychological analysis of Judas will never be accomplished in this world. The data are of enormous interest, as we have seen, but they lack completeness. The moral estimate of Judas, however, is less difficult; and it is permissible, not indeed to judge him, but merely to say that he did in a direct and personal fashion to Christ what we are all prone to do, perhaps in less direct and more impersonal fashion, to the Gospel and the Faith. For some particular reason, the precise nature of which is debatable, he made of Jesus a means to his own ends. The end may have been thirty pieces of silver, or the gratification of itching

ambition; or it may have been an Apocalyptic Kingdom. But in any case it was something which Judas wished to possess or achieve for himself, by means of Jesus. Judas, having looked into the eyes of God, remained his own centre. And that, as we have said, is the great betrayal. It is the assertion of unconverted self-will, which claims Almighty God, and the universe, as its servants, and eventually seeks to manage the affairs of God Incarnate. Such appalling distortion may be more common than we allow ourselves to suppose.

Thus, we betray Christ to-day, when we accept the Christian Church and the Christian Faith as means of preserving a particular social order which happens to maintain us in comfort and importance, while it condemns tens of thousands of our fellows to an indecent scuffle for bread. The present writer once heard a prosperous gentleman deliver the opinion that England was in great need of a religious revival, to prevent the growth of social and economic dissatisfaction amongst the poor. He said that if the poor could be persuaded to think about their soul's salvation, they would think less about housing and wages. What the writer replied to this opinion is scarcely fit for *verbatim* report. But that attitude reproduces the very spirit of Judas. Christ is sold, not to the priests, but to the profiteers and plutocrats. And the sooner the Church makes it entirely clear that she adores and obeys her Lord, and does not hawk Him to the highest bidder in order to secure her own ease or prestige, the sooner will she exert her due power in the modern world.

But the danger is not only upon one side. There

is a corresponding peril, from the opposite quarter, that Christ may be made a mere tool in the cause of purely secular revolution. It is quite easy to invoke Him as an authority against the present economic system. It is quite easy for the Church to win popularity by supporting a revolutionary theory of collectivism in the Name of her Master, but to abate all His searching and revolutionary claims upon the souls of men: to omit His eternal kingship, and to lend His prestige to those who are glad to use it, but who would scorn the idea of kneeling to Him—those who would use Him and His Church as the weapons of one class, in a class war, but would never own Him as Conqueror of their souls. That also is the betrayal and sale of the Saviour. Not that there should be any doubt concerning the revolutionary social bearings of the Gospel and the Sacraments—but these issue from the facts of Incarnation and Atonement as the cure of sin. The Gospel of society and the Gospel of the heart are one and the same. Christ was crucified, and He offers us the cross to bear, because the world needs to be saved from sin. To offer Him as the world's Saviour—only from Capitalism or from Bolshevism, is to sell Him.

Likewise, all the consent which Christians give to the attempts to secure the complete human good apart from the supernatural Kingdom of the Cross: the whole outlook of modern secularism, helps to constitute the great Imitation of Judas Iscariot. Judas wanted something for himself, and he wanted to secure it by means that would cost him nothing. If it is true that he wanted the speedy appearance

of the Messianic Kingdom, then he, and not Jesus, was the eschatological fanatic; for our Lord had always implied that the coming of the Kingdom involved His followers in the bearing of the cross. Judas thought it could be achieved more easily, by another method. The world is always seeking other ways of securing its desired end. It thinks it can secure peace by bloody war; and economic justice by strikes and lock-outs; and social content by coercive legislation. And there still lingers the curious superstition that somehow the common good will be achieved by the machinations of admittedly worldly-minded, astute, ambitious politicians. And the Church allows herself to be dragged hither and thither, at the beck of this "cause" or that "party," and has been shamefully enslaved by the interests of modern States and Empires. And that also is the sale of Christ, who seeks to rule all men from the Cross of His humiliation, laying Himself down as the foundation of His own civilization, and not seeking the applause of earth-born factions, hungry for their own ends. What He demands is that we accept Him in His suffering and shame as the sanction of our society, the law of our soul's life, the canon of our public and private ethics. He is betrayed down the ages. The monstrous self-regard of men makes even of Him a weapon of its defence and a tool of its undertakings. To invoke Christ as Lord of this world of hatred and bloodshed and wicked injustice: smugly to deceive ourselves that He has anything for it but tears: falsely to use His name and call this thing Christian, is treachery. And so long as we betray Him, we betray Him to a

perpetual Sacrifice, not knowing that His prayers alone save us from perdition.

Even Judas, gone about his loathsome labour, was remembered in the prayer of his Lord. In the Garden, He spoke to His Father of the "Son of perdition." But it is possible that the words ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας should receive a more gentle interpretation. They may mean, "the lost son." And one would fain believe that the Saviour, looking upon all our so-called Christian civilization which puts its material interests first, and then accepts Him as an auxiliary of its comfort: that, viewing all the smug "Christians" who are chiefly concerned about their own respectability, and all the religious militarists, and all the secular revolutionists who regard Him as an archaic socialist agitator—looking, indeed, upon all of us who are willing to accept Him on our own terms, looking upon traitorous, proud, blind humanity, He prays for us as "lost sons."

Dante placed Judas in the nethermost pit of hell. Fortunately, it is not a certainty of Catholic dogma that Judas is in hell. Fortunately! For if Judas is in hell, it is likely that he will be accompanied by many who have made a fairer show in the flesh, but who have never so far learned Christ as to obey Him absolutely, and have always preferred rather to sell Him than to suffer with Him. They sold Him less grossly and less obviously than Judas did. Their hands seem unsoiled, in the grey fog of our earthly morals; but their hearts are sullied with a great selfishness, of which they have made even a dying God the minister.

II

THE TRIAL OF THE JUDGES

THE Incarnation of the Son of God must necessarily confront the authority and government of this world with a problem of profound difficulty, since He comes to remind us that our accepted standards and methods are utterly at variance with Supreme Reality. If He is right, man is not only sinful: he is ridiculous. He has been clothing dishonourable things with honour, and prostrating himself before the very powers that have spoiled and distorted his life. Force, and money, and meaningless social eminence—these have been the shapers of his action. Our Lord looks upon these solemnities for a brief moment, and dismisses them with a word. From what the world calls obscurity, poverty and weakness, He turns the world upside down. This means, quite naturally, that those who have ridden high above their fellows will possibly find themselves, under His judgment, of comparatively small account. They will find the rules and regulations of this world, which have been so profitable to them, shattered and cast down. The prospect is more than they can bear. It is either madness or wickedness, but at all events it is impossible!

Thus, when God came up for His trial before the sons of men, they adjudged Him guilty. Of all the

wild and ludicrous positions conceivable, this is chief. We may say, in deepest reverence, that it would be the cosmic joke, if it were not the cosmic tragedy, that the weak and shadowy figures of time, the creatures of the breath of God, should gaze upon God their Prisoner, and conclude that He was not quite fit for their company. This, assuredly, is the ultimate absurdity, that by the standards of human action, the standard of divine action should be dismissed as impossible, and the Divine Actor, coming to save the very foundations of human solidarity, should be grouped with cut-throats and pickpockets and nailed, like vermin to a board, as an enemy of society.

The fears and the interests of this world brought Jesus Christ to judgment, and it chanced that the world, upon this occasion, was served by three not unrepresentative figures. We were represented by Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod; and these judges have been ungratefully treated by the world whose principles and motives they so faithfully upheld. For so long as the world refuses to accept Jesus as entirely possible, entirely normal, entirely right, it is mere hypocrisy to regard Caiaphas and Pilate and Herod as exceptional monsters of evil. They were unfortunate in having to publish the opinions which the majority of us practise—and conceal. It was their lot to send God Incarnate to the Cross, not quite knowing what they did. We, knowing far better all that is involved, profess horror of their action, without revoking their judgment. Indeed, we have learned to praise their Victim—but we do not allow Him to interfere with our arrangements.

He is no longer visibly present in our streets, and we are relieved from the worst pressure of an awkward situation. Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod were less fortunately placed. They met Him in person, and had to deal with Him as a fact. And their dealings constitute the most painful revelation of the human heart that the world has known. For the singular feature of this trial was that the painful revelations which it disclosed were revelations, not about the Prisoner, but about the judges. And while with weak and windy words they judged Him, He judged them with the eternal wisdom of overpowering silence.

The story proceeds from the arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, and all the narratives agree that Jesus was brought directly to the house of the High Priest. Matthew avers that He was at once taken to Caiaphas. Mark and Luke do not mention the High Priest's name, and John has it that the first examination was before Annas. There is, however, no discrepancy here, but rather a side-light upon the group of Jewish authorities who were chiefly responsible for the course of events. In the year A.D. 6, Quirinius, becoming Governor of Syria, appointed Annas High Priest. This position Annas retained for nine years, until Valerius Gratus, succeeding Quirinius, gave the post to three men in succession, none holding it for more than a year. The second of the three was a son of Annas. But in A.D. 18, Valerius appointed Joseph Caiaphas, a son-in-law of Annas, who remained in office until A.D. 36. He was succeeded in 36 and 37 by two other sons of Annas.

From these facts several conclusions announce themselves. Annas, out of office, was still a power at the time of our Lord's arrest, and quite probably carried on an amount of semi-official activity. It is possible that he had retained apartments at the official residence of his son-in-law. Caiaphas, who kept his place for so many years, must have been an astute and adroit person, considering the difficulties of his position in view of the Roman occupation and the confusion of the times. And apparently one of the chief objects of these two men was to keep power and position within their own family. At least, they succeeded more than moderately well in doing so. When Jesus was brought before them, He was brought up to be measured by an intensely alert and crafty vested interest.

This becomes more evident when we consider certain incidents which preceded their action in making the arrest. According to the Synoptics, our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem was immediately followed by His cleansing of the Temple, an act which must have appeared to be aimed directly at the priests, and specially at the family of Annas. The whole Temple-traffic which He so dramatically interrupted, was a systematic extortion of money from the pockets of pious visitors, in the private interests of the high officials. They monopolised the sale of sacrificial animals, which could be purchased only at one place, and at prices fixed by the priests. Roman currency was not accepted at these sales, and therefore must be exchanged for shekels. The priests fixed the rate of exchange and controlled the business. And thus, out of the devo-

tions of faithful Jews, these pretty servants of the sanctuary enriched themselves regularly and without scruple.

The flaming wrath wherewith our Lord purged the sacred precincts was directed, therefore, not against a number of more or less ignorant and irreverent tradesmen turning a more or less honest penny, but against a deliberate system of fraud, involving gross sacrilege, engineered by those whose sacred duty it was to preserve the Temple of God inviolate. And if the Pharisees had disliked the moral teaching of Jesus, the priests at Jerusalem disliked yet more fervently His economic activities. Doubtless their hatred was increased by their observation that the common people were in sincere sympathy with His attack. If the Pharisees were annoyed at His being hailed as Messiah, the priests were more deeply angry that the first national enemies to be actively assailed by this Messiah were no other than themselves. Conscious of spotless respectability and a voluble patriotism, they could see in this Messianic deed nothing but an absurd paradox.

It was shortly after this that there occurred a consultation of priests, possibly at a meeting of the Sanhedrin, two days before the Passover, at " the palace of the High Priest who was called Caiaphas," when obviously the decision was taken that Jesus must be arrested and somehow involved in a capital charge. The only qualification in their decision was that the arrest must not be made on the Feast day, for fear of provoking a hostile demonstration of the people against themselves. The Synoptics

give but a brief notice of this incident, but the Fourth Gospel has a much fuller narrative, and one which by its lifelike touches gives the impression of being trustworthy history.

But the Fourth Gospel relates another event, apparently then recent, which had increased the exasperation of the priestly party. It is not entirely easy to combine the Johannine series of happenings with the Synoptic record at this point, and there are some discrepancies which cannot be explained away; but it is clear that shortly before the priestly conclave which decided upon the arrest, news was abroad in Jerusalem that Jesus had performed in Bethany a stupendous miracle, in raising Lazarus from the dead. It is not our business here to estimate the historicity of that story. But if the story was being told in Jerusalem, it is easy to understand that Caiaphas was bitterly incensed. For not only was another wonder being reported, to increase the renown of the Person who had already deeply offended him by cleansing the Temple; but the wonder was of such a nature as directly to destroy the priestly reputation in dogmatics. For Caiaphas and his party were Sadducees; and if it were to be commonly believed that Jesus had brought a dead man to life, the sadducaic philosophy would be endangered.

At all events, in the Johannine record the first subject of discussion at the council of priests and Pharisees is the miracles of Jesus. There the patriotic fear was expressed, that if He were allowed to be longer at large, the Romans would " come and take away " their " place and nation." And at this

point Caiaphas contributed what our newspapers would call a "telling speech," pointing out that precisely because the situation was thus, it was expedient that Jesus should die—"That one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." But a brief examination of the deliberations of this council as reported in the Fourth Gospel, reveals the complete insincerity and cynical agnosticism of those who led the attack upon Jesus. The argument was that the continued freedom and increasing popularity of Jesus would arouse the suspicion of the Roman Government, since it would be supposed that the Jews were proposing to set up their own king. The Romans would then simply obliterate the last remnants of national life, and crush out the long and glorious tradition of Judaism under an iron heel. It was therefore a matter of national expediency that Jesus should be removed.

Now, as a matter of fact, the entire orthodoxy of Judaism was supposed to believe in the coming of a Messiah, whether soon or late; and both the literary and the popular expression of that belief connected the Messianic advent with the overthrow of the foreign masters. In any case, therefore, the appearance of a Messiah, and his acceptance by the nation, would, upon the received doctrine, have involved some kind of conflict with Rome. And if a person was to be killed, rather than become the occasion of such conflict, the Messiah himself, whoever he might be, would have to be sacrificed. The confident national hope, however, was that the Messiah would triumph over the enemy with a word

of his mouth, and completely restore the fallen fortunes of his countrymen. But the priests and Pharisees never discussed whether Jesus was likely to do this. He had attacked them; and if His Messiahship were vindicated, it seemed likely that He would carry out a drastic reform of the religious administration. They, therefore, in their deliberations, carefully avoided discussing the possibility that He *was* the Messiah.

They adopted the line that for a person to be hailed as Messiah created a grave public danger. This logically meant that the true Messiah would be a public danger, and must be put out of the way. It was a revelation of their utter lack of faith in the prophecies and hopes of their religion. It was a clear announcement that they did not want any Messiah, and regarded such an advent as a highly improbable phenomenon. They were comfortable at the moment and did not wish to be disturbed. But most definitely their argument declared that they would not, at any cost, tolerate a Messiah who dared to criticize them. And thus, again, they showed themselves utterly irreligious. Their correct course as the custodians of the Jewish religious tradition, in view of the popular support given to our Lord, would have been to conduct an inquiry into His credentials, His doctrines, and His purposes. As we shall see, when they had Him in their clutches, the only vital question they asked was upon the subject of His claim to the Messiahship. For Him to make that claim was, in their eyes, a sufficient ground of conviction and punishment.

We are now in a position to estimate the kind of

justice likely to be meted out to Jesus at His examination before Annas and Caiaphas. They were fiercely intent upon protecting their own gains and privileges. They had already decided that He simply could not be reconciled with these things. So far as they were concerned, He was impossible.

The series of examinations before the Jewish authorities has to be reconstructed from the various, but not necessarily discrepant, accounts of the proceedings in the four Gospels. John alleges that Jesus was taken before Annas; and considering the prestige of that person, and the likelihood that he occupied apartments in the official residence of the High Priest, who was his own son-in-law, there is nothing improbable in this assertion. It is therefore permissible to follow the commentators who interpret the passage (John xviii. 13, 14, 19-23) as referring to an examination by Annas, though it is not entirely impossible that the reference is to the examination by Caiaphas reported by Matthew and Mark. This would accept the Johannine account as meaning that Annas merely received the Prisoner, and immediately passed Him on to the High Priest. The examiner is called "the High Priest," though habit may have continued to give this title to Annas by way of courtesy. But assuming that it was Annas who asked the question in verse 19, it must be remarked that the process was quite illegal. And when our Lord advised that the question should be put to competent witnesses, He was actually pointing out His right in Jewish law. This private interrogation of a prisoner was entirely *ultra vires;* but such was the disposition of those

in authority, that for venturing to suggest the proper course of action, our Lord was struck by an officer, and was admonished for being disrespectful. Jesus replied by asking that they should either name His precise offence, or cease from that kind of treatment.

It will be seen that He did not face His examiners in complete silence at first, but quietly and composedly stated the law which they were supposed to be administering but were manifestly breaking. It seems, however, that Annas speedily had enough of this Prisoner, and sent Him bound to Caiaphas, with whom, according to Matthew and Mark, were assembled "the Scribes and elders" (Matt. xxvi. 57-68; Mark xiv. 53-65), in what was a quite irregular meeting. Possibly the attitude taken by the Prisoner before Annas had been reported to them, for they made a hurried attempt to collect such witnesses as they could trust. If He wanted witnesses, witnesses He should have! The evidence thus obtained was wretchedly feeble, and our Lord treated it with the contempt it deserved. Scores of respectable people might have been brought, to give a fair account of His sayings and doings, had His accusers been willing to delay the examination. But speed, and a sure verdict, were their only objects; and since they must make a show of complying with the demand for witnesses, they produced in haste a number of obscure and obvious liars whom they had not sufficient time to prompt with the particular lies required. At length they procured two who told the story of what Jesus had said about the Temple. Caiaphas, an astute man, saw that the Prisoner

refused to treat this kind of evidence seriously, and allowed His enemies to lie to their heart's content without making reply. The High Priest therefore came to the real point without further delay, and putting the Prisoner upon oath, asked Him point-blank if He was " the Christ, the Son of the Blessed."

Now, this was a question which, as High Priest, he had a perfect right to ask; and our Lord answered it quite openly. According to Matthew, the answer was, " Thou hast said," Σὺ εἶπας; according to Mark, " I am," Ἐγώ εἰμι. In the former case it was probably an affirmative, and in the latter, an affirmative beyond all doubt. And it was followed by a prediction, in eschatological terms, that the position of judge and judged would be reversed at some future time. This was the moment at which Caiaphas would have been justified in asking for evidence of His Messiahship; but for reasons we have already seen, nothing was further from his intention. He rent his robe in simulated horror, and dramatically declared that there was no more need of witnesses. This admission from the Prisoner was sheer blasphemy, and He would now ask for the opinion of his colleagues. They declared that the Accused was " guilty of death," and maintained the august dignity of their office by spitting in His face and maltreating Him. Thus did the Lord of glory stand His trial before this precious gang of venerable ruffians, who, touched in their pride and in their pockets, overrode law and decency in their determination to shed His blood.

Early in the morning came the proper and official procedure, turned in advance to a fiasco by the

proceedings of the night. Here, according to St Luke, Jesus was formally arraigned, and was once more asked if He claimed to be the Messiah. He replied, most aptly, that no answer that He could make would be of any use. He had already been pronounced worthy of death for making the claim (Luke xxii. 66-68). He simply asserted that the Son of Man, whoever He might be, would thereafter "sit on the right hand of the power of God." As if to say, "Have it your own way. If I am an impostor, you have power to judge me. But if I am not an impostor, I shall judge you." But apparently the whole assembly pressed Him for a definite answer to the question. "Then said they all, Art thou the Son of God?" His reply, Ὑμεῖς λέγετε, ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, is not easy to translate. "Ye say that I am," makes no sense, for they had said nothing of the sort. The marginal rendering in the Revised Version, "Ye say it because I am," is no better. It was probably a method of placing the decision upon their shoulders, without further assistance from Him, and should perhaps be understood, "Do you say that I am?" "What do you think about it?" Perhaps it was quite clear, at the moment, that He was finally submitting His claim before the supreme court of His nation; and that meant that He did, actually, make the claim. Certainly they so understood Him, and the trial of the Messiah before the representatives of God's chosen people came to an end. The hope of His coming had lifted the hearts of their fathers in the darkest hours of the nation's history. He had now come to His own, and His own spat in His face.

The morning examination reported by St Luke is often identified with the night examination recorded in Mark and Matthew. There is no real need for making this identification. Both Mark and Matthew mention that after the proceedings of the night, before Caiaphas and the chief priests, elders and scribes, when false witnesses were procured, there was another meeting in the morning, and Mark describes it as a meeting of the "whole council." St Luke mentions no witnesses, and it is highly probable that he is recounting the scenes of this full, formal, and properly legal assembly of the morning. The very words attributed to our Lord assume a previous examination. And it is necessary to understand this, in order to appreciate our Lord's final attitude. He had already acknowledged that He declared Himself to be the Messiah. Now, before the full council, who must have known perfectly well that He had made this admission, He will not reiterate His claim. They must make up their own minds. He leaves with them a terrible onus. They accepted it, dragging Him away to Pilate. Thus ended the religious significance of Judaism.

Of course, the whole process was ludicrous. Not only was it illegally based, not only was the evidence paltry and the behaviour of the judges scandalous; but the conclusion was entirely farcical. They condemned Jesus for asserting that He was their nation's Messiah. Thus, apparently, for *anyone* to make such an assertion was blasphemy; and how they would have discriminated the true Messiah did not, upon their procedure, appear.

Upon their own method, they would have been compelled to kill their Messiah, at any time. The evidence in support of Jesus must at least have stayed their hands, had they condescended to hear it; but they completely suppressed it. The very thing they ought to have discussed was the one thing they dared not discuss. And this august assembly of Jewish leaders and magnates was reduced by its own fear and cupidity to the absurd admission that it could not accept a Messiah at all. The nation's representatives abrogated the nation's heritage and sacrificed its hope.

The scene now changes, and before Pilate we are immediately conscious of breathing a different air. Whatever may be our estimate of the Roman Procurator, he certainly is an improvement upon the Jewish priests. Indeed, a fair judgment must considerably revise some of the verdicts passed upon him alike by Jews and by Christians. The former have charged him with cruelty and oppression; but in truth the evidence adduced shows no more than that early in his official career he made mistakes through inexperience of Jewish custom and temper; and that later on there were certain limits beyond which he would not allow public disorder to pass. Judged by ordinary standards of Roman administration, Pontius Pilate cannot be described as a monster; and the fact that he remained in office for ten years, a length of tenure exceeded only by that of his predecessor, Valerius Gratus, is proof that his policy and conduct did not produce any impossible situation.

Christians have regarded him as a heartless cynic,

chiefly because he asked the question, "What is truth?" and washed his hands when he had consented to the crucifixion of Jesus. But the question is not necessarily either cynical or sceptical. It may have been merely the exclamation of a very worried gentleman, who did not doubt that truth was a reality, but was growing a little perplexed in his search for it. In fact, the picture of Pilate making essays in Pyrrhonism in the midst of a vexatious trial is rather absurd. And as for the fact that he washed his hands—this at least ought to meet with sympathy from us who do the same thing and regret that we can do no more. The sober truth is that the examination of Jesus was conducted by Pilate with scrupulous fairness; and we have to remember to the credit of the Roman administration that in this trial a verdict entirely favourable to the Prisoner was reached. Pilate, having reversed the judgment of Caiaphas, becomes a symbol of a certain disastrous failure in mankind only when he declares his verdict and admits that it cannot be executed. The story is one of psychological interest; and concerning Pilate's own course of action, three important observations have to be made.

1. He did his best to understand Jesus, and, unlike the priests, gave Him serious encouragement to explain Himself. He obviously set out with a perfectly fair mind, and with the intention of doing justice. This is proved by several considerations. According to the Fourth Gospel he inquired carefully as to the nature of the charge, and seems to have listened patiently to what St Luke indicates

as a long indictment. All the narratives relate that early in the trial he asked the Prisoner if He admitted the charge. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" The Synoptics report that our Lord replied with the words "Thou sayest"—and if this phrase was indeed a recognized affirmation, we find our Lord making a solemn declaration not only to the custodians of Jewish religion, but also to the guardians of world-order. Mark and Matthew here record that Pilate was deeply impressed by the fact that Jesus did not trouble to make any further reply to the accusation. But it is likely enough that the brief Synoptic notes omit some details of more than secondary importance, and they do not call attention to the fact that the gravamen of the charge had been altered to suit the new circumstances.

The Fourth Gospel allows us to see a little more closely into the course of the examination. It declares that in reply to the question, our Lord, who had been called within the judgment-hall, the Jews remaining without, for ceremonial reasons, asked the Procurator whether the question was his own, or had been prompted by the accusers. This indicates that He perceived a distortion of the charge upon which He had been condemned by Caiaphas. He had been committed for blasphemy, in claiming to be the Messiah. Now He is accused of political sedition; and He wishes to know whether this was Pilate's uninformed reading of the Jewish complaint, or actually the charge preferred by the priests. Pilate, in response, seems to have entered into some discussion. "Am I a Jew?" ("Do you suppose I have any interest in accusing you of

anything?")—"Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?"

Our Lord, as soon as He knew that this was the charge upon which He was to be tried by Pilate, made it perfectly clear that He admitted no guilt. He had no intention of subverting the secular order by force (John xviii. 33-36). Pilate was genuinely puzzled, and seems really to wish to understand. "Art thou a King, then?" he asked. Our Lord's reply, "Thou sayest that I am a King," raises difficulties which we have already noticed in connection with His reply to the council. Pilate had said nothing of the sort; and here again, an interrogative form adds richer meaning to the words: "Do you say that I am a King?" "What do you think about it?" And this lights up the following words: "Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice." The meaning is: "You may know the answer to the question, Pilate, if you are a lover of truth." It was at this point that the Governor asked, "What is truth?" And considering that he immediately went out and declared that he had discovered the important truth that Jesus was innocent, it is certain that he did not mean his question in a cynical sense.

Our sense of Pilate's interest in Jesus is deepened by the record of the Fourth Gospel, that having heard the mob crying "Crucify him," and explaining, in response to his reiterated verdict, that the Prisoner ought to die, under Jewish law, "because he made himself the Son of God," he came back to the judgment-hall and asked the strange question:

"Whence art thou?" For the first time, apparently, he perceived that there were depths here which he had not plumbed, and discerned that the Jews had not fully disclosed the motive of their enmity. He therefore approached the Prisoner again, upon this more obscure accusation; but our Lord would say nothing, and Pilate attempted to coax some explanation from Him, pointing out that he had power to condemn or acquit. Our Lord, with a considerate courtesy wonderful enough in the outward circumstances of an accused man before a judge, pointed out that in any case the chief responsibility for His being there at all did not rest upon Pilate. Pilate was but the servant of Cæsar, upon the one hand; and upon the other, the Jews had delivered Him for trial. And from this conversation Pilate arose to make one more declaration of his verdict.

Now, the Fourth Gospel, although its account is much more full and detailed than those of the Synoptics, does not contravene the indication of Pilate's attitude which they yield. Moreover, upon independent grounds, it is admitted that in these closing chapters it betrays the close observation of an eye-witness. We are therefore justified in concluding that Pilate was interested in his Prisoner, and took considerable pains to understand Him. Certainly our Lord treated the Procurator with more ease and freedom than He had displayed before the High Priest; and this suggests that He recognized that He was confronting a reasonably honest man. We gather that the Roman Governor, unlike the Jewish priests, set out upon his examina-

tion with the unhesitating purpose of reaching a fair verdict. How, from such a starting-point, he reached an infamy which he shares with Caiaphas and Herod, is the story of a tragedy more common than is usually recognized.

2. In the second place it must be observed that Pilate actually pronounced Jesus innocent, and strove with some perseverance to make his verdict operative. At a quite early stage of the proceedings, if we are to trust St Luke's narrative, he declared to the chief priests and to the people that he found "no fault in this man." And later he was able to emphasize his verdict by pointing out that Herod had concurred in it. All four narratives agree that, finding his judgment questioned by the Jewish authorities, he still sought to gain his end by allowing them to assume a virtual conviction, but releasing Jesus, not as an innocent man, but as a prisoner pardoned in accordance with the custom of the Feast. There is an indication in Mark (xv. 8-10) that he had grasped the situation so far as to understand that the charge was not of popular origin, and that he had grounds for hoping that the vote of the people would support his design. And both Mark and Matthew explain that the cry for the release of Barabbas was due to persuasion exerted by the priests upon the crowd.

His failure left Pilate still unwilling to allow a person whom he had pronounced innocent to suffer death, and he asked the crowd what they wished him to do with Jesus, supposing that he were to release Barabbas, challenging them to say what

evil He had done. St Luke adds that he made a further offer. He would stretch a point in the direction of meeting the priests' wishes. He would have Jesus "chastised," provided that His subsequent release was accepted by them as settled. Thus the Synoptic portraits of Pilate reveal him making what we are compelled to describe as a serious effort to secure an acquittal. His repeatedly uttered judgment was that the Prisoner was guiltless. He sought by various expedients to secure His freedom while avoiding a public disturbance. He first announced his verdict. Then he proposed that Jesus should be given advantage of the custom of the Feast. Then he suggested a compromise, and offered to administer a comparatively moderate punishment. At the very last, he did not cease to express his own opinion.

The Fourth Gospel says nothing to disturb this conception of Pilate's action. It asserts that he did actually order that Jesus should be scourged, some time before he gave up the struggle for His release. It relates that when the soldiers had decked our Lord in the vesture of mock royalty, and the crown of thorns was upon His head, Pilate brought Him out to the people for the express purpose of telling them, yet again, that he found no fault in Him. After his final interview with the Prisoner in the judgment-hall, he "sought to release him." And up to the last moment he was arguing with the Jews—"Shall I crucify your King?"—a phrase probably intended as an insult to the accusers rather than to the Accused. In fact, the whole evidence goes to prove that Pilate made a genuine

fight for our Lord's life and freedom. But here arises a pointed question. Since he was Procurator of Judea, it seems that his verdict might easily have been made sufficient, without all this argument. Competent judges are not customarily found pleading with the plaintiff to accept the decision. Why he was compelled to fight for a recognition of his verdict, and how he failed, we shall shortly see. His dramatic and disgraceful breakdown must come home to our own bosoms and business.

3. Alongside of these features of Pilate's conduct, appears his manifest desire to evade any personal responsibility either for registering a verdict against Jesus, or for enforcing his own declared judgment. The wish to escape the dilemma becomes evident early in the trial, according to the Fourth Gospel, where it is reported that having ascertained that the Jews were preferring a serious charge, he suggested that they should try the Prisoner by their own law. Evidently he speedily discerned that the priests were bent upon securing a verdict against Jesus, and that nothing less would satisfy them. Possessing instincts of honesty and a legal sense, he could not allow the accusers merely to dictate his decision; but, on the other hand, he knew their capacity for mischief-making, and he did not wish to offend them unnecessarily. Hence he turned to any expedient that promised deliverance from a difficult situation.

Learning that the charge was a capital one, in which the priests could exert no final jurisdiction, he was compelled to conduct the examination. But

St Luke relates that he quickly sought a second way of escape. Immediately he discovered from the depositions that Jesus was a Galilean, his anxious mind remembered that Herod was in Jerusalem, and he sent the case to the Tetrarch then present in the capital for the Feast.

We may turn aside, a moment, from the sterner stuff of Pilate's difficulties, to examine and dismiss the slight and relatively insignificant incident of the examination before Herod Antipas. Had the issues involved in the whole story been less appalling, this trial by Herod might even have appeared as a comic interlude, with the Tetrarch as the buffoon. John Baptist had denounced him. Our Lord had called him a fox. He was "exceeding glad" to see Jesus, hoping, like a child at a pantomime, to be amused. He wished to see a miracle—some thrilling piece of conjuring. To him our Lord spoke not one word. He treated him with sublime scorn and profound silence. And Herod took his spiteful little revenge in mockery and ill-usage. From St Luke we gather that it was the soldiers of Herod, led by the Tetrarch himself, who insulted our Lord with the mock robe of royalty, though the other Gospels attribute similar conduct to the soldiers of the Governor, either toward the end of the trial, or after its conclusion. The examination before Herod produced no result. He failed to pronounce the Prisoner guilty, probably having forgotten that it was a trial, and not an entertainment. He passes out of the story, a fit emblem of that irresponsible frivolity which, not seldom in the world's history, has sat in seats of honour and

fooled with serious affairs. One can imagine Herod, in our own time, settling affairs of State between two items at a jazz dance.

Pilate's action has been described as an attempt to gain the Tetrarch's goodwill by a courteous act ; and it is true that St Luke observes that the two men became friends that day, after a period of enmity. But that result might have accrued, had Pilate's actual motive been very mixed, or even had he never thought of pleasing Herod. His action may quite possibly have been partly, and even wholly, due to his desire to shift the task of judgment to some other shoulders. His proposals for a release, or for a moderate punishment, besides being attempts to save Jesus, were obviously also such courses as would save the judge from pronouncing finally upon the real issue. And when every proposal, every shift and subterfuge had failed before the concentrated and obstinate malice of the priests; when no argument would avail, Pilate washed his hands, declared that he was not to blame for what was now about to happen, and advised the multitude that the responsibility was entirely theirs. He remained to the very end utterly unconvinced by the indictment, and declaring plainly the Prisoner's innocence.

But we return to our haunting question. How came it that this fair-minded and apparently patient official, the powerful representative of the Roman might, consented to his clear and definite verdict being set aside by a popular clamour which he well knew to be an entirely artificial thing, engineered by interested parties? Having authoritatively stated

that Jesus was not guilty, he allows Him to be treated as though the verdict had been exactly opposite. He had shown interest in the Accused, and had fought for His acquittal; but the end finds him helplessly watching the apprehension of Jesus by soldiers, and the crowd, in high spirits, moving off to Calvary. He was the Procurator of Judea who had more than once taught Jews the weight of the Roman arm. He had a reputation for hardness and unsparing strictness. How came it that he sat now so nerveless and supine, as the noise and confusion died away?

The explanation is provided by a brief sentence or two in the Fourth Gospel. When the Governor's intention to secure a release became patent, the Jewish leaders calmly showed their hand. He had exercised the authority of Rome upon them, had quelled nationalist fervours, and had taught them the mastery of Cæsar. They would turn the tables upon him, now. They suggested that the acquittal of a person charged by the Jewish authorities themselves with sedition would not present Pilate in a very favourable light at Rome. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar" (John xix. 12). Pilate heard the words and measured the covert threat. He had doubtless discerned such an issue from the beginning, and had tried to escape by avoiding a final judgment. He knew, now, how it would be. There would be a report against him, cleverly phrased. There would be evidence, cunningly hatched. It might mean his fall and disgrace. He saw, in a moment,

that to do justice to one man, there and then, would probably cost him wealth, position, power, success—everything! He concluded, at length, that in the circumstances Jesus was impossible. He hated these Jews, and the narrative of the close of the trial suggests something like a fierce wrangle between him and them. But they held the whip-hand. They must be allowed to have their way, this time.

It will be recalled that Caiaphas, also, had considered Jesus impossible in the circumstances in which he found himself. It was thus our Lord's fate to be judged similarly, in the end, by the world's greed and the world's justice. The one found it impossible to endure Him: the other found it impossible to save Him. And we may now very briefly estimate the revelation, which the trial of Jesus affords, of the human reaction to the intrusion of the divine activity upon our crooked paths. The vested interests of this world which secure profits from unrighteousness, and produce, from the toil and poverty of many, fortune, ease and graceful environment for some, will always be found assuming that Jesus Christ is impossible; and when they allow the mention of His Name in prayer and praise, it is not He who is remembered, but some more possible, but quite imaginary figure, who will never interfere with their gains. The powers of this world, founded upon force and forging ever more perfect weapons of death, will always dismiss Him as impossible. And even when they inscribe His Cross upon their banners, they will succeed in forgetting why He went to the

Cross. The whole structure of society, built upon greed, glorifying material wealth, fortifying the rich, balking and browbeating the poor, will assume that Jesus Christ is impossible. Society may refer to the Faith upon its coinage, but it prefers the coins to the Faith. The whole assumption is that the human motive, as we know it, is normal for humanity ; and if God comes in to deny this, God is treated as a dangerous lunatic. God is guilty of blasphemy ; for He seems to question the divine right of the Bank of England. He seems to cast doubt upon modern industrialism. He seems to question the wisdom of war. God is guilty of blasphemy against that other god—the god of things as they are. He is worthy of death. Thus is the divine activity judged by the creature in his perversity and pride.

The family of Annas sat long in their secure seats in Jerusalem. They still remain, secure and comfortable, in Parliaments and board-rooms, in clubs and country houses, judging God. The divine sanity of sacrifice, generosity and forgiveness, yet awaits approval in this world, when it comes to the consideration of serious ways and means. And so little are the Deeds of Christ, in the Manger and upon the Cross, regarded as possible foundations for the city of man, that many who are appalled at the consequences of the enthronement of self can suggest only that the acquisitive and self-glorifying motive may be so enlightened as to find its fullest scope in a collectivist order. But the method of socializing the acquisitive motive has not yet been discovered—principally because the proposal is a

contradiction in terms. The world goes on, unwittingly praising Caiaphas and paying him, because Caiaphas lives in so many souls. It wonders, vaguely, why life is such a pandemonium; and it will continue to wonder until, in some incredible dawn, perhaps a dawn red with blood and horror, it discovers that, after all, it is Caiaphas who is impossible.

But the judgment of Caiaphas is not universally representative. There are other and perhaps nobler spirits, who are not quite blind. They know that injustice is injustice, even when solemn politicians call it public necessity. They know that an economic system may be a kind of hell, and the playground of devils, even though learned people call it the result of natural law. They know that war is a dirty and obscene thing, though poets may call it patriotism. And they do not scruple to give voice to their opinions. Consider their many speeches and sermons, their many books. Consider this book. They see and approve the activity of God, and call it divine. They find no fault in it. They fain would set it free upon the world, to cast down and to build up, to slay and to make alive. But they have perceived that unfortunately it may cast down their own comfort and slay their reputation.

It is a terribly difficult thing, to act upon one's belief, when one happens to believe that this poor Prisoner, with nowhere to lay His head and not a friend in court, is actually Almighty God. It means that one ought to go and kneel before the Accused, kiss His feet, and take the consequences.

But to set one's face against Cæsar, or to seem to do so, is to set one's face against one's popularity and influence, even against one's bread and butter. It becomes scarcely a dilemma, at last, for one of the alternatives is seen to be—impossible! So we pass a resolution, and go home, as Pilate did. Pilate is of those who, seeing the world's evil, consent to it in the end, because to do otherwise is highly dangerous. Modern philosophy, indeed, had not provided him with the admirable excuses of which we may avail ourselves. We, happily, can decide to wait until by moral evolution the opinions of society have reached accordance with the revolutionary claims of God. Pilate knew nothing about moral evolution. He did not foresee the glorious day when profiteers would appreciate prophets and Cæsars would encourage quixotic acts of generosity to seditious visionaries. The day, incidentally, has not yet dawned, in spite of our rapid modern progress. He had to decide, then and there, upon a definite question concerning two living men. One was Pontius Pilate. It happened that the other man was God, though Pilate did not know it.

We also, in facing modern moral and social issues, are ultimately deciding between ourselves and another man—perhaps a coal-miner, or a shop assistant, or an "unemployable," even though we do not know his name. And when we so prudently decide to do nothing rash, but to await the course of evolutionary ethical development, we are doing in our way precisely what Pilate did in his. We are abandoning reason and conscience, playing

for our own safety, and leaving the result to the blind fates. Pilate washed his hands in water. It makes little difference that some of us are more accustomed, for ceremonial purposes, to wash ours in ink.

And it is still true that the other man is God: not in the false and sentimental sense that suffering to which men are forced and which they endure with curses is deifying, or even edifying; but in the sense that the unrighteousness of our paltering cowardice does fetter and enchain the divine activity. Evolutionary ethics, indeed, is a name to which no sort of reality can ever be attached; and for the simple reason that as soon as men really believe in it, ethics will cease. Clearly, if moral evolution be a fact, and mankind is growing better, as boys grow bigger, Pilate's action might conceivably have been wise. It might have been well to give up a difficult problem and faintly trust a larger hope. The only objection to that course is that it does not assist the onward march of morals. It assists the suicide of morals. When men look for the victory of righteousness to come without their own bitter sacrifice and the shedding of their own heart's blood, righteousness is already beaten. And whether we then wash our hands in water or ink, we are washing them in the blood of our fellow-men, wronged, down-trodden, forgotten. Pilate, in his way, desired the Kingdom. He blenched at the notion that he also must take up his cross. He no doubt regretted that he must abandon his generous defence of this strange Prisoner. We likewise are full of excellent regrets. And while His enemies are driving in the nails,

we, His friends, busy ourselves writing a minority report, declaring that, nevertheless, He is a King. With this we adorn His Cross, while His dying cry shakes the earth and blackens the sun.

III

THE CRUCIFIXION OF MAN

The eyes of Jesus had looked out upon a world which He found beautiful, yet strangely sad. He remarked the loveliness of flowers and the bounty of the earth; but He perceived man's perpetual and painful unrest. He found the sons of His Father vexed, disordered. He saw them suffering in a thousand ways. Around Him thronged the crippled and the broken. He met some whose souls were deeply shaken by madness: others who were cast forth as refuse from the ways of men. He saw sorrow upon all sides. He had looked upon the filthy sores of beggars. He knew that slaves were being beaten and that debtors were languishing without hope in foul prisons, even while He moved in love upon the Galilean roads. And at the end, when this tormented human creature had so widely misjudged as to lift the body of the Saviour high upon the gallows, there, too, He found sorrowful company.

He was not solitary, upon that dark hill; for upon either hand there rose against the sky a cross, and upon it a twisted and tortured victim. It was not unfitting. If He was the Man of Sorrows, He had found mankind sorrowful enough. If He was crucified, He found men being crucified by His side,

so that He and they could speak together. He was numbered with the transgressors; but however He had died in this world, this must have been His lot. He passed out with thieves; but His mission was to Man, the Thief of the World, who had stolen the earth and the years from God. He had come to a crucified race: to a world wherein agony and grief were common, where fear walked abroad, where blood and tears had been shed in rivers down the centuries.

A great part of the strength and skill of man has been employed for the infliction of pain upon man. Always, of course, he declares that eternal justice is behind his grim purpose. The victim is always an enemy of cosmic order, and his destruction is the work of a divine ministry. Society must be defended from traitors within and from foes without. "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die." How much of fear and vindictiveness may be commingled with this profession of social loyalty, may be a subject for speculation; but it is certain that criminals, whether they be individuals or nations, are not in reaction against any true social order, for no such order has yet appeared. They do but carry a common motive beyond an agreed boundary, or seek a commonly accepted end by unauthorized means. If they are unsuccessful, they are punished. If they are successful, they change the rules of the game, and they are crowned. The two crucified thieves, therefore, are no isolated phenomena, though the psychology of that hypocrisy which can regard them with loathing is sufficiently familiar. They may have been hanged and

nailed as vermin because they were thieves and dangerous characters; but the whole point of this triple crucifixion is that the middle cross exhibits mankind as a dangerous character, since it murdered Christ. And it is probable that the reason for the presence of the other two men is to be looked for in the greed of the general heart.

It would be mere cynicism to suggest that law represents no social will, but only common fears and suspicions. This was the heresy of the younger sophists, long ago. But indubitably particular laws may and do express the selfishness of some, and thus provoke in others the spirit of rebellion and reprisal. Yet if there fall upon these the strong sword of "justice," they are despised as offal. The theft which is legal is deeply scandalized by the theft which is illegal. Profiteers are specially severe upon pickpockets. Caiaphas, no doubt, was horrified at the deeds of brigands and cutpurses. Nevertheless, between the two thieves upon their crosses, and the swarms of the respectable, there was perhaps no very wide gulf. It is always a chancy decision, what sort of selfishness shall be thought pardonable, and what shall be visited with disgrace. It is interesting to reflect that during the period in which capital punishment was being extended to an ever larger number of crimes, it was never proposed that the gentlemen who stole the common lands should be hanged.

The enemy of society is judged by society; but his deeds should be estimated in relation to the society which judges him. Were the divine judgment to descend upon us, we should all find ourselves amongst

the pariahs; and when Christ hung between two thieves, these were our natural representatives. They were but more explicit examples of man's self-originated sin, and of his self-inflicted punishment. They are not really in a class by themselves. If there be a criminal class, it includes us all. For though men declare that adultery is a disgraceful offence, our Lord destroys our complacency with an alarming definition of that offence. "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." And though men declare that murder is to be paid for by death, the New Testament hoists us with our own petard, proclaiming that "he that hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

It may be said, then, that human punishment is rarely pure, since it is devised by a society contaminated by greed and pride and administered by those who share the motives of the condemned. It always contains some element of vindictiveness: it is always, in some degree, an expression of selfishness against selfishness. We are not concerned to whitewash the criminal: we merely suggest that society cannot whitewash itself at the expense of the criminal. The latter is in a sense a martyr—a witness to the human sense of the inadvisability of pressing the human motive to a conclusion too logical. He suffers for too specialized an application of a selfishness which is universal. But his blow against his fellows, and their retort upon him, are but more conspicuous examples of the battle of interests and desires which so largely disturbs the comity of the earth.

He suffers, mayhap; but with him we all suffer for the common folly. Disease is in our bodies, poverty in city and countryside, anxiety upon a million brows. Our dead are scattered across the world. Our laughter has ever some sound of hollowness. Our gaiety is always a little forced. The joy of life is an ideal unrealized. Mankind has wounded itself. The terribly real activity of this creature has placed him upon an age-long cross, and there hang all kings and poets and common men. There hangs also the Divine Man, for our release. We have tortured ourselves in obedience to greed and lust. The solidarity of the race ensures that selfishness shall become a social disaster, so that at last we all must share the general consequences of the common sin. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and the sins of the children break the fathers' hearts. We strike down our rival, and cripple ourselves by that very blow. Nation meets embattled nation, and in a frenzied grip they work a mutual ruin. The privileged, faring daintily, boast themselves, until they have learned that slums may poison a whole people. Always our greed eventually impoverishes us, and our cruelty brings us anguish. The individual may not see or feel these things in his brief passage through this world; but the race has sufficient evidence of them. We make a cross for our neighbour, but he has made one for us, and together we agonize: or if we seem to escape, our children's children will measure our sin by their own suffering. To such ends has man's will wrought, that only if God also mount the Cross

with him and share that pain, can he be delivered.

There is a story told in a certain English diocese of a modernist bishop and an elderly evangelical canon who were discussing theology. The bishop dismissed the doctrine of the Fall, propounding in its place that doctrine of the Rise of Man, which some people imagine to be scientific, and to afford a loftier and more hopeful view. The canon listened in silence, thoughtfully stroking his beard. "Then, my lord," he said, when the bishop had done, "if we have not fallen, how is it that we are down?" Nor was this a mere begging of the question. For in the centre of our consciousness is the knowledge that our sin is not a method of arrival, but a mode of departure. And further, we are aware of no guarantee that our sin will naturally diminish. It must be remembered that the doctrine of the Fall is not based exclusively upon anthropological conceptions which may, or may not, be outmoded. It rests upon ethical and psychological considerations, and upon personal experience; and it happens to make intelligible the Christian conceptions of Incarnation and Atonement. If we believe that man is rising by an assured process, and yet attempt to profess the Christian creeds, we are committed to the assumption that in the course of his upward movement he killed the Son of God. Those who find nothing difficult in this way of thinking will possibly find it easy to suppose that when our race has risen still further in the appointed scale it will crown its evolution by obliterating itself in some orgy of poison-gas.

As a matter of logic, if we assume that human existence is not static, there are but four possible interpretations of our situation. Either man is not free, and is being slowly evolved by natural forces; or he is not free, and is degenerating; or he is free, and by his own choice is ever improving; or he is free and fallen. No Christian philosophy can adopt either the first or the second alternative. No sane person can believe the third. It is the fourth, the doctrine that human history contains a potent element of tragedy and moral eccentricity, that will abide beyond all the feeble fashions of thought, for the great agony of our story is not the healthy pain of a forward adventure. Our chief malady is not growing-pains. A shallow worldliness may take that view, but the conscious heart knows better. It knows that by its own action it is warped and shrunken; but also that there is some profound frustration of the noblest, deep within its nature. And reflecting upon the interaction of human wills, it sees an enormous erection of false assumptions, perverted standards, whereof the name is "the world." It observes that the new generation, deriving from the old, treads the old path; for we are all born upon the wrong road. And the conclusion is that this is the chief cause of our calamities.

The opposition of wills, engaged upon the ends of self, the distortion of real action from the divine communal motive, produces chaos and public disease, which from time to time is heightened into widespread suffering. This perpetual crucifixion of man is a fact before our eyes. It is specially visible to-day in our economic struggle, with all its

grave possibilities; and in the threat of war which still overhangs the world in spite of all our leagued professions of peaceful desires; for you cannot have self-will and peace.

England has for some years lived upon the threshold of catastrophe, just saved, by a few make-shift provisions, from the worst *dénouement*, and never knowing when the dreadful blow might fall. In the leading article of a London newspaper, published during the coal strike of 1926, one found this admitted; and the admission was the more valuable, because the newspaper has no sympathy with socialist apologetic. It was the *Daily News* which declared:

> It is difficult to exaggerate the intensity of the diseases to which the nation is at this moment a helpless victim. There are three million men and women on the unemployment lists (including the miners on strike). In the richest country in the world there are in normal times, apart from any industrial upheavals, three million people actually in want of most of the necessities of civilized existence. In town after town where the very streets pulsate with the roar of industries that are providing prolific dividends for the shareholders, the housing conditions of the workers are described as "shameful" even in the soulless columns of government reports.

No local or temporal causes can possibly explain this situation. It existed before the war. It exists all over the world in greater or less intensity, where industrialism has penetrated. No momentary economic recovery will abolish it. For no merely economic account of this condition is a sufficient account. The position is not that we are

powerless so to exploit natural resources as to satisfy the needs of our people, but that we fail so to order our methods as to provide millions of our fellows with decent opportunity. Nor is this the result of any particular enormity of ill-will in any one class. It is the expression of a universal moral failure. The explanation must run deeper than economics.

There are some who continue to speak of over-population, as though nature were behaving with this unfortunate human species as though it were a tribe of ants or locusts. No more than Mr Scrooge, however, do they propose to consider themselves amongst the surplus. And their proposed remedies, segregation, birth-control, and lethal chambers, mark their whole attitude as radically unchristian. The doctrine of over-population by the poor, indeed, may possibly be quite out of touch with biological reality; for, upon the other hand, it is asserted that in circumstances of dearth, there appears an increase of fecundity, nature, in some mysterious manner, providing a compensation for the threat against the species. If this is true, it would seem that the scientific method of dealing with the menace of over-population amongst the half-starved is to feed them. Moreover, it is a moral and mystical certainty that not by our eager self-protection against the weak and unborn can we secure ourselves: for those we would exclude are, with us, members, or potential members, of one divinely-purposed sodality, and we, without them, are not made perfect.

It may be, as some theorists now tell us, that our

present condition is due simply to lack of purchasing power upon the part of those workers whose labour has been made superfluous by the development of mechanism, and by the recent rapid extension of mass production. It is alleged that our national productivity is greater than before the war, but that demand cannot even keep pace with supply. Less and less human labour is needed, the number of wage-earners tends to become relatively smaller, and the whole situation is thus perpetually aggravated. But all theories present us ultimately with the same picture, the picture of man engaged upon the day's work for less than the common good.

Rightly considered, work is the employment of human strength and skill upon the natural world, for the ends of a spiritual society. And the setting free of men from drudgery, by the improvement of technique, ought to mean, not that some shall be free to idleness in luxury, and others free to idleness in semi-starvation, but that the whole society shall share a common freedom which shall be devoted to the balanced development of body, mind and spirit. But those who are in possession are inclined to imagine themselves happy—until there comes a knocking upon the door of their fool's paradise, and they learn in some day of disaster that because the family of man is one family, misery is contagious, and the possessors must eventually go with the disinherited to a common Calvary. For Calvary, after all, is in this world. It was a place where thieves were crucified, before God came that way. The world may find its Calvary to-day amidst its

markets and machinery, where a vast system, unsocially controlled, threatens to escape from all control and to carry us to a communion of penury.

If man is thus stultified and thwarted by his own greed, he is plunged into more spectacular torment by his own cruel pugnacity. War has provided occasions for dramatic heroism and self-sacrifice; but in this world there was no need to introduce warfare for that purpose. Moreover, the object of fighting is not that I may become virtuous, but that I may kill my enemy. It seems an easy escape from the danger of his presence, that I should put an end to him. There are no rules to this game, when once it is begun, no matter what chivalrous professions may have been announced at the outset; and I am at liberty to devise any deceit or horror to compass the enemy's destruction.

So long as armed combat may be confined to individuals or to comparatively small groups, its full significance does not appear. Even within such limitations, however, it is manifest that when life becomes a perpetual preparation for fighting, values are distorted and the soul is crippled; for to place all controversy beneath the arbitrament of the sword is to abrogate man's royal gift of wisdom. But human life is such that it is impossible that conflict should remain thus confined. And if it is retained as the method of argument, it must become the method of argument between those enormous associations of peoples and races which are characterizing the modern world. Upon the perfecting of that method will be lavished all the ingenuity of

science and all the complex resources of modern organization. The quarrelsome barons have gone. The quarrels of nations are becoming outmoded. We have entered a period in which wars must be world-wars, wherein ranks of nations will be opposed across continents, and the means employed to secure success must necessarily be adapted to a new situation.

Perhaps the ordinary citizen has scarcely troubled to learn the chief lessons of the last war. A somewhat sluggish imagination allows him to suppose that the next will be no worse; and preoccupation with his own affairs prevents him from inquiring too closely as to what a succession even of such wars would mean for humanity, within the next century. Within fifty years the world saw the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the American Civil War; the Franco-Prussian, the Russo-Turkish, the Americo-Spanish, and the Boer Wars; the Chino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars; various colonial wars, chiefly British, in Asia and Africa; and a series of wars involving the Balkan States—to name only the greater conflicts. And this martial ardour, translated into the conditions of the late world-war, would, in a similar period, work unprecedented loss and woe. But the conditions are still rapidly changing.

The average civilian seems not to understand what is signified when our military experts inform us that the next war will be one, not of lines, but of " zones." It may be well, therefore, to explain that while " lines " may be far away from centres of government, industry and residential population,

the " zones " will be precisely those centres. We have the considered opinion of General P. R. C. Groves, Director of Air Operations on all British fronts in 1918:

> In the first phase of the next war, there is little doubt that the belligerents will resort to gas-bomb attacks on vast scales. This form of attack on great cities such as London or Paris, might entail the loss of millions of lives in the course of a few hours. . . . All gas experts are agreed that it would be impossible to devise means to protect the civil population from this form of attack.

In the light of such a forecast it is possible to understand what mankind has been doing in its wars. It has been preparing a cross of death for the race, and there hangs over us now a terrible threat of doom. By our distorted activity we may yet accomplish the end of our history, and the human race may discover most literally that the wages of sin is death. The greed and pride of nations, fed and fortified by the greed and pride of individuals, may yet destroy humanity, and upon this cross man may utter his last, despairing cry.

There is, then, no cause for wonder, that when the Saviour of the world came to His death of pain, He should find Himself accompanied upon either hand by sufferers dying as He died. Man is crucified, whether God be crucified or not. But when our Lord entered the warped and unnatural society of men, upon Him also there fell the racial burden of woe. It fell swiftly and heavily, almost before His youth was sped, because He made no

attempt to evade it, or to defer its incidence. He accepted it, laying Himself upon our cross and transforming its significance by such supernatural power as makes it, when He bears it, an instrument of healing and renewal. He chose to suffer, and His suffering was a battle. We hear His cries, and they are as a commentary upon the process of that struggle.

But there are two of His utterances in those dark hours which bring home to us with sharp poignancy the fact that He was suffering with all the confused, blind suffering of tortured men throughout the ages. He cried, "I thirst." The Eternal Son of God was in the grip of some dread, unspeakable conflict for the soul of man. Upon the meaning of His pains the profoundest minds have pondered, finding here some ineffable, transcendent deed, but dimly understanding that hereby the whole past and future were being transmuted. Yet from the heart of that mystery He speaks, and angels might prostrate themselves and listen: worlds might well wait upon His speech. What revelation, what shaking, penetrating word might come from a dying God! But He said, "I thirst"—words spoken a million times by the dry lips of suffering children, by condemned prisoners, by the wounded, by the weary. Very human words! But that is the revelation.

His are the thousand sparkling rills
That from a thousand fountains burst,
And fill with music all the hills:
And yet He saith, "I thirst."

All fiery pangs on battlefields,
On fever beds where sick men toss,
Are in that human cry He yields
To anguish on the Cross.

The divine activity had reached to the lowliest extremity of our labour and our pain. Even the worst physical effects of our folly had now touched Incarnate God. If selfishness and hatred cause pain to human bodies, they caused pain to Christ's body, and He thirsted as all the victims of man's cruelty may thirst. He became one with men dying in slums, and upon stricken fields—one with them in the crude pangs of unsatisfied physical craving. The thing that brutality does was done to Him. The grossest results of our distortion lay upon Him.

More than this, however, He suffered the effects of man's perverted life upon mind and soul. St Matthew and St Mark record the awful cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some critics hold that St Luke omitted it because it was too painful for the later reflection of the Christian community, and was likely to disturb the developing Christology. It is suggested that its appearance in Mark and Matthew indicates the lower view of our Lord's Person originally held by Jewish Christians. Considering that Mark and Matthew record our Lord's acceptance of St Peter's confession of faith at Cæsarea Philippi, together with the predictions of a most shameful death, and the story of a stupendous resurrection, we may dismiss this suggestion as quite valueless. For, at all events, if the development of the Church's experience was

accompanied by a development of Christological statement, which seems natural enough, the fact remains that the Church retained Matthew and Mark amongst its authoritative documents, and thus signified its belief that God Incarnate had cried aloud His knowledge of forsakenness.

The cry itself is a repetition of the opening words of the 22nd Psalm, which is not ultimately an utterance of despair, but of confidence and hope; and it is likely enough that our Lord had in mind the whole Psalm. Yet the psalmist himself obviously had known terrible loneliness, and our Lord knew it. This need not mean that at this moment He was utterly unable to discern the presence of His Father; but even if that interpretation be offered, it does not necessarily imply that He was actually separated from His Father. If He went down in the darkness of Golgotha, it must yet be remembered that He once lay in the darkness of Bethlehem, a sleeping babe upon Mary's breast—unconscious, yet Incarnate God. This logic cannot be shirked by Christian thought.

But the cry may imply that He now understood, with human understanding, how men can open their eyes upon this world, and look into their own hearts, and miss the friendly Face of God. Here He was one with all those in whom the bitter waters of this world have quenched faith: with all who, beholding the inhumanity of man, his triumphant injustice and blatant, jeering cruelty, can find no divine love anywhere. He stood at this point with all agnostic idealists, whose fine sensitiveness has so suffered in contact with rough and disillusioning

circumstance, as to leave them facing life as an insoluble problem. He companied with all the poor, browbeaten crowds from whom our "civilization" has driven the energy of belief. That is to say, His own experience comprehended theirs, though it infinitely surpassed theirs. He understood the last, ruinous effect of the world's unfriendliness: that a man should look up to a blank, indifferent sky, and suppose that his anguished prayer echoed idly in the void. He comprehended this utter and culminating breach of communion: this last, lost loneliness of the soul.

It is impossible to suggest a psychological analysis of the dying Saviour. It is impossible to say how far His own deep knowledge of His unity with His Father was affected by His sharing the extremity of our disaster. It is sufficient to be assured that in the valley of the shadow of death, mocked, broken and tormented, He knew two things. He knew that God abides, the everlasting Foundation of the world in which this thing could happen. And He knew how upon the mind of a man at war with the world and beaten in the conflict there comes the numbness of despair, an appalling sense of solitariness, wherefrom all fellowship has fallen. Living even then within the life of the Blessed Trinity, He understood the dread breach which sets a man alone in the universe and makes the homely house of God strange, affrighting.

To this situation of pain and loneliness, however, He had come from realms beyond it. Unlike the sons of men, the Son of Man chose to enter this earthly scene, conveying the divine activity to restore

human action to its true direction. Between two suffering criminals He hung; but even there the work of the world's rescue was begun. One man upon a cross reviled and rejected Him, as this poor, maddened world so largely continues to reject Him. The other turned to Him, and was promised the peace of Paradise. "This day shalt thou be with me. . . ." This outcast malefactor, weakling, consentient to the storms of passion and circumstance, came home from the ends of nowhere. Upon the cross he found a road to everlasting communion, because he found God suffering by his side.

Yet all three remained upon their crosses. Nor shall all our penitence nor all our tears deliver us yet awhile from our crucifixion. In this world, until God's Kingdom come, we must labour and suffer. Into this world of labour and suffering has come the divine revolution. It is not yet victorious. The apocalyptic glory does not yet gild our earthly city. As we have seen, our Lord believed that His death was for the salvation of mankind; but He bade His followers take up the cross and follow Him. His offering was to be the source and spring of a new world-offering, which we must bring. It was to be the signal of the new warfare, which we must share. And to a crucified race the Gospel offers no immediate release from the cross. It confronts us, suffering in bitter loneliness, suffering in the conditions of the world's self-will, and offers us a sacrificial fellowship. We are crucified; but from our cross we may look toward heaven or toward hell. We may be crucified in a dreadful isolation

of hate and despair; or we may be crucified with Christ. With Him, our pain is transmuted. The horror passes. We carry the cross as the sign of a crusade, whereof the end shall be a better thing than all our dreams.

IV

THE DIVINE ASCETIC

The Enemy of the people, safely scotched at last, hung helpless before the eyes of the beholders. The hands that had healed the halt and the blind, the feet that had wandered over Galilean roads upon errands of mercy, were now pierced with nails. The radiant expectation of a Kingdom to come was eclipsed, and the King had no throne but this public gibbet. Then, of course, those who passed by saw clearly that the priests and Pharisees had been right. This was the issue, this the palpable fact, and all the hopes had been but an idle dream, a poor will-o'-the-wisp which this young man had followed to His undoing. A lesson, indeed, for the presumptuous! He had set Himself up as the Messenger of God, upon His own authority. He had offered Himself as the Saviour of the people. Those who sat in Moses' seat had seen through Him, and this was the result. There He was, completely helpless, no word from heaven to protest in His behalf, not a man to strike a blow for His deliverance. He simply hung there, and suffered.

It would seem that the three crosses stood within easy sight of a road—probably a road running to Jerusalem. Passers-by, going upon their business, turned their heads and paused to consider the

spectacle. Officials from Jerusalem came out to witness the end of their work. The morbidly curious drew near. They were all extremely wise, in face of this stark object-lesson. Here was so complete an anticlimax, and the deductions were so obvious, that the impulse to say "I told you so" was irresistible. And thus, nodding knowingly at the Cross, they chattered. "A poor kind of Saviour this, who can do no more than hang like any criminal." And they called grossly to the victim, "Thou that destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself." "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross." A pretty wit! But there was no answer at the moment. These humorists did not understand that God had all the future time, and eternity, for His repartee. They were satisfied that Jesus of Nazareth was a failure. "He saved others; himself he cannot save." What further proof could reasonable minds require? The ultimate test had been applied, and He was found out.

The original commentators upon the Cross have received belated support in our own time. It appears that there are those amongst us whom the beam of modern wisdom has so enlightened as to reveal to them that these first critics were just. Jesus, it seems, is no kind of example for us men. His acceptance of suffering was a mistake. The Cross itself, it seems, is a pitfall for humanity, and we must turn away from that sorry sight, to patterns of finer resolution and vigour. If we would serve our day and generation aright, we must be up and doing, with bustling energy, giving blow for blow,

answering taunt with taunt, overcoming our enemies by the means readiest to hand. To submit ourselves to them is weakness. To sink and faint upon a cross is to admit their right to trample upon us. The true heroes do differently. They protest and struggle to the end; and the end is conquest, for they put their foes to flight. None can at the last say that they were failures. None can deride them. For they stand triumphant in the daylight, possessing the field, vindicating themselves.

This was the opinion expressed by Mr H. G. Wells, when he essayed, some years ago, to provide us with an adequate religion. In *God the Invisible King*, the distinguished and highly successful author felt it necessary to criticize the behaviour of Christ upon the Cross, and to explain, to a public no doubt anxious to learn, the right mode of conducting oneself under the ordeal of crucifixion.

" Our crucifix, if you must have a crucifix," he says, " would show a God with a hand or a foot already torn away from its nail, and with eyes not downcast but resolute against the sky; a face without pain, pain lost and forgotten in the surpassing glory of the struggle and the inflexible will to live and prevail."

Here follow the four dots whereby our author signifies the impressiveness of a passage. A little later, he returns to the subject.

" We of the new faith repudiate the teaching of non-resistance. We are the militant followers of and participators in a militant God. We can appreciate and admire the greatness of Christ, this gentle being upon whose nobility the theologians

trade. But submission is the remotest quality of all from our God, and a moribund figure is the completest inversion of his likeness as we know him. A Christianity which shows, for its daily symbol, Christ risen and trampling victoriously upon a broken cross would be far more in the spirit of our worship."

It is easy to sneer at theologians for "trading" upon the nobility of Christ. Some popular novelists have been known to trade in less reputable wares. But it may be said at once concerning the person who wrote these passages that he obviously did not understand either crucifixion or the crucifix. Mr Wells' god might do this or that. We cannot say that he would not do as Mr Wells suggests, because he has never had the courage to show his face—unless we are to understand that he is identified with all suffering men. Unfortunately, they imagined that the sufferings were entirely their own. But a God who is made man must endure human torments as man. That is the whole point; and perhaps if Roman soldiers had ever nailed a novelist to a cross, it might have curbed his notions as to the possibility of any free and forceful gestures.

If the God-man wished to deprive His enemies of their victory, He could have taken action long before He reached the cross. If he were prepared so to deny His human nature as to tear Himself from the tree of death, He could have avoided even the humiliation of a trial. He could have raised an army and stormed Jerusalem. And if He could not do thus, if He were compelled to recognize forces too strong for Him, He would then surely

have avoided quite useless and melodramatic struggles upon the Cross itself. But the whole meaning of our Lord's submission is that it was a chosen submission. He who might have summoned legions of angels, refused even the poor sword of Peter. But He was not dragged to Jerusalem in chains. He came thither with set face and awesome mien, bent upon a mighty purpose. He came to save others precisely by the method of not saving Himself. He came to declare the divine revolution.

The humblest Christian, observing a crucifix modelled in accordance with Mr Wells' notion of what a crucifix should be, would know that it was not a Christian symbol. He would know that it could never be the sign of our salvation. He would miss the awful dignity. He would discern something not a little disgusting, in the image of his God struggling and writhing to be rid of His Cross; for he knows well enough that he himself has always sought to escape from his own cross. If Jesus was hanging there defeated in the course of a war upon this world, it might perhaps seem a noble and defiant deed, were He, in such extremity, to seek to descend and renew the conflict. But He had come to save the world. He prayed for those who nailed Him there. The Cross, in His view, as we have seen, was necessarily implied in the work He had to do. We may admire a patient for battling against a fell disease; but we do not admire a nurse for seeking to evade the irksome accompaniments of her task. We do not commend a doctor for refusing to answer a night-call. And it so happens that

the Eternal Son of God had come to show all the fussy, would-be saviours that their method does not save the world.

There is, of course, a prior point at issue, and it is the question of what is meant by the salvation of the world. Those who think that man needs to be saved only from such oppression and limitation as forbids his exercise of self-will, may take Mr Wells' view, even though with him they think that self-will needs to be identified with the will of the race. But those who believe that both the self and the race need to be delivered from self-will and converted to the doing of God's will, will understand that one mighty revolution is first of all necessary, and its name is Renunciation. The Christian theologians who "trade" upon the nobility of the "gentle being" who fails to fulfil Mr Wells' ideal of a Saviour, have at least His authority for supposing that He came to save a world perishing in its own pride and waywardness. And no critic who overlooks the fact of human sin can ever come near to understanding what our Lord was doing when He yielded Himself into the hands of sinners.

Underlying most modern attacks upon the Cross is the assumption that human energy has suffered no wide misdirection. Swinburne, Nietzsche, and all the neo-pagans have really made the assumption that there is nothing radically wrong with mankind. They see nothing unnatural in the "natural man." In their view it is the Christian Faith that seems a puzzling perversion. The neo-pagan conceives that the life of man finds its entire scope in this world, and cannot imagine that its purpose is other

than a full and unquestioning acceptance of power and pleasure for their own sakes. He sees man, a bundle of possibilities. He sees life, a quickly passing opportunity. He hears the urgent call, feels the strong spell, of the world—and for a man to forgo satisfaction, to abstain from the deepest draught of earthly bliss, seems unbearable folly.

> One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
> One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
> The Stars are setting and the Caravan
> Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste !

But, let it be remembered, all pagan positivism, all its laughter and wine and roses, is a dance of despair, in which the gay figures stand bleakly outlined at last against that cold Dawn of Nothing. Its optimism is a pretence, an attitude. Behind all its joy there lies the grim certainty of disillusion and death. Even when the pipes of Pan are sounding most alluringly, his devotees know that his worship is a sorry task, coming to no joyous culmination. The vine leaves wither, and the dance flags, and men grow old and sad.

> Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose !
> That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close !
> The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,
> Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows ?

Therefore, as Mr G. K. Chesterton has remarked, it is well to consider that paganism came first, and Christianity second. The world turned to the Faith as to a refuge and a release from an intolerable situation.

Now, it is nothing but a misrepresentation to

say that the Faith denies or despises the world. It merely sets the world in its due place as the means, and not the end, of life. It accounts it a servant, and not a god. Man, it declares, is placed in this visible environment for ends which are eternal; and it is through the just employment of the visible that he serves the Invisible. That is to say, the Faith involves a sacramental doctrine of life. But since the Gospel is given to a race which has misused the instrument it must necessarily include an element of asceticism, calling men to forsake the world that they may know how to approach it, to lose the world that they may know how to possess it, to hate it, that they may know how to love it.

Christ came, however, for a greater reason than to set us a pattern. He came to draw the deflected activity of man into its true course, fighting those forces which urged us to our ruin. He had therefore to expose the actual nature of the worldly motive, and the actual nature of the divine motive. When men have killed Him, they may at length pause to observe that there must be something amiss with their hearts. When all men, everywhere, understand that what killed Him was the common purpose of possessing this world as a good in itself: the preference of the temporal to the eternal—the purpose and preference of Caiaphas, of Pilate, of Judas, of every unregenerate soul, they may behold all the world's life as twisted and awry. He came to conquer self-will; and the opposite of self-will and the only power that can overcome it is Renunciation born of love. Being reviled, He reviled not

again. Smitten, He was as a sheep dumb before the shearers. In other words, He lived the life of the Blessed Trinity in the midst of His murderers.

The Incarnate Will of God in the world that men had made could perform no greater act for men than to allow them to despise Him utterly, and to drive Him from their midst. There was no other course for the Saviour of mankind. He could not accept the world as He found it. He must display the last, sublime truth, that the Will of God remains, even when this world is lost: that the Purpose is the real consideration, the instrument but secondary. He must live, and at length die, upon the presupposition of Eternity. He must bare the divine heart of fellowship to the spears of hate; for He had come to show that the eternal love was still looking for men.

Upon the helplessness of Christ at Calvary, therefore, is founded the practical Christian morality. The Christian ethic is sacramental in principle, regarding this world, and the powers of man, as gifts of God to be employed in God's service of divine-human communion; but undeniably it has an ascetic tendency. The Church has held that one may eat and drink to the glory of God. It has held that marriage is honourable. But it has also maintained that in some instances the glory of God is made visible in abstinence, and it is this which provokes the pagan protest in every age. The pagan can understand Jesus drinking wine and scandalizing the puritans. He cannot understand Him pouring His young blood like wine, and scandalizing the pagan. He can understand His

praise of flowers, but not His crown of thorns. Not until the pagan has seen the relation between our Lord's appreciation, and His renunciation, of the world, will he be able to understand the sacramentalism and the asceticism of the Church. Christ accepted death, not in dispraise of life, but of life's misuse. He went to the Cross, not in despair, but for the joy that was set before Him. He called His friends to take up the cross and follow Him, not for the pursuit of pain, but for the gaining of a crown. He declared that it might be well to lose one's hand or eye, rather than miss the way to the great Kingdom. He did not "come down from the cross," because the cross was His road to power.

The ascetic principle in Christianity is not of pessimistic origin, and where asceticism within the Church has exhibited morbid traits, it has been false to the Faith. The object of Christian asceticism is restoration, realization. There is in it no taint of nihilism. But it does depend upon the recognition of man's nature as twisted and spoiled. The Faith would invite us all to eat and drink to the glory of God; but seeing that the flesh lusteth against the spirit and men do actually mistake the means for the end, the Church allows that by all her people at certain seasons, and by some of her people at all seasons, the true proportions of life shall be indicated by fasting and abstinence and renunciation. In the Kingdom of God there will be no need for this, for there

> We shall sit at endless feast
> Enjoying each the other's good.

But in this world we are tempted to seek and to enjoy each his own good, through the satisfaction of appetite, as life's real business.

Judging from the conclusions of many observers, and from the evidence of contemporary plays and novels, there is a definite modern movement against the ascetic principle, and against the fundamental Christian conception of behaviour. The getting of money seems to be considered a duty of breathless solemnity, and the indulgence of sexual appetite appears to be regarded as a sacred right. Now, the Church does not teach that either the possession of property, or the satisfaction of natural desire, is in itself wrong; but it says that, governed by inadequate motives, either may be deadly sin, for one may be covetousness and the other lust. Hence, where it is impossible to enjoy property or to satisfy appetite in accordance with full social purpose, and with the conviction that in this activity lies a divine service, renunciation becomes the Christian method.

The Church has thus allowed some to profess vows of poverty; and the modern world considers this a somewhat futile course. It is comforting to the natural man to be assured that he can do no good by going short of material gains, and that the solution of our economic problem lies in a greater general productivity. Yet it is questionable how far a Christian is justified in accepting more than a modicum of comfort in a world burdened with luxury and squalid poverty. In this world he belongs to the Church militant, and until the battle is won he should learn to be content with a soldier's fare. Until the present situation is relieved,

it is questionable how far we can reconcile the Faith with the enjoyment of material abundance. It is even questionable how far society is justified in heaping up goods which its own economic system will infallibly divert from the needy, and bestow upon those who already have enough, or more than enough. If it should appear that in order to establish a generally decent standard of life there must be a reduction of the standard now enjoyed by some, there can be no doubt as to the measure of readiness which Christians ought to manifest.

We shall do wisely to refrain from a hasty assumption that a true socialization of resources can be achieved without a limitation of the present habits of some. And if it be argued that one best serves the material welfare of the commonwealth by productive expenditure, the reply is twofold. First, it is a Christian's duty to see that all men have an opportunity of spending. Second, the most productive forms of expenditure, in the present state of society, beyond that which is required to keep us efficient, are those whereby we contribute to the social benefits organized by the State, and those whereby we support those voluntary charities which are amongst the noblest expressions of the Christian spirit.

But in a society wherein men are largely concerned to secure material gain for its own sake, or for the sake of the self-glory which may accompany it, the acceptance of holy poverty as a vocation has nothing to do with a condemnation of goods and possessions. It is merely a witness to the Eternal Purpose, whereof goods and possessions can never

rightly be more than instruments. This is the renunciation, not of life as a gift of God, but of life as men live it. It is an imitation of Christ. Nor does the Church require that all her people shall constantly tread this path and no other. The body of the faithful are expected to apply to money and possessions the sacramental principle; and this will cost them dearly, at times. They are to use, but not to abuse them. They are to employ them for the divine-human communion. It is to the world enslaved by mammon, worshipping mammon, that the Church may recommend the example of St Francis as a strong medicine for the world's disease.

The principle is to be applied, in like manner, to the problem of sexual relations which attracts so much attention, whether serious or merely prurient, in our day. There can be no doubt that numbers of people are being persuaded to adopt a radically unchristian attitude toward sex, and are consenting to the deliberate teaching that by denying the indulgence of their own desires they are somehow being false to nature. Certain presentations of the "new psychology," too, are helping to convince many that rigorous restraint, so far from being wise and healthful, is positively mischievous to body and mind. And what with art for lust's sake, and doubtful science, and the definite literature of license, the atmosphere grows poisonous. Marriage is openly ridiculed by some young people of respectable descent. "Free partnership" is offered as the humane ideal, though the idealists who preach it are studiously vague as to whether free partnership for one week differs essentially from free partnership

for ten years. But even indiscriminate intercourse is condoned by some who attempt to speak seriously. One conclusion is obvious. Either the old morality was an unbearable repression, or the new morality is no morality at all, but simply the facile tolerance, by a weak-minded generation, of a most dangerous and destructive sin.

What is seldom discussed by the apostles of indulgence is the *meaning* of the sexual relation, and its place even in a purely natural economy. If they wish to "turn and live with animals," they must recognize that the urgency of sex amongst the beasts is only periodical, and lacks many of the psychological concomitants which it possesses in human experience. It is, moreover, entirely subservient to the interests of an animal species. It is never an end in itself. The beasts, unlike some modern ladies and gentlemen, have never yet cultivated a spurious mysticism upon that subject. But if these people wish to retain the human status, they must remember that the primary human sex-complex is made up of physical desire, the need for mental and spiritual intercourse, and the desire for offspring, and that the segregation of these centres of interest produces strain and disaster. The human sex-complex is thus an element in the human social structure. To regard it as carrying rights which must be asserted at all costs, is to misunderstand it. Human experience, fortified by the Christian revelation, has decided that the sex-complex receives its true social exercise within the limits of strict monogamy. There it subserves an ideal end. And only for the sake of that end—for the main-

tenance of the race as the sphere of the divine Kingdom, is the sexual relation permissible. It has no other meaning, but that of loving service. But complete abstinence, and the celibacy to which the Church gives definite status, do not cast doubt upon the purity of marriage. They are but a missionary witness against the world's filthiness. Here is no heartless turning from the beauties of the home and from the gentle gaiety of little children. Here is only the renunciation of lust, carried to a stern and medicinal extreme by some, that the majority may live in sweetness and health of body and mind.

The conclusion from all such discussion depends upon whether one believes that man's whole environment is this planet earth, or that we are related to supernatural issues whereof the present world is but a field of expression. It depends upon whether we believe that time is all, or that it is the instrument of eternity. For the full and faithful acceptance of a positive Invisible may require the apparent negation of the visible, if the visible have already been misapplied, misapprehended. This apparent negation of the visible and temporal, however, will express the character of the Invisible and Eternal; but no opposition to the world by the world's methods can do this. No man upon a cross, violently protesting, could do this. For the cross upon which the Redeemer must be laid is the cross upon which man's sin has stretched mankind, and men have always been ready to come down from that cross to save themselves. They have always been seeking to evade the consequences of their own deeds, and of the deeds of the race. He alone can be their

Saviour who will accept the cross as the weapon of a new and revolutionary purpose: who will renounce all safety and ease and embrace the worst that this world can do, in order that He may stand with His lost brethren in their last extremity.

The Son of Man had not where to lay His head. He was born poor and lived poor. He died a death of shame and grief. But it was He who said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, *and all these things shall be added unto you*"—sufficiency of food and raiment, wholesome comfort, laughter in youth and serenity in age. He invites us to no warfare against life itself. He came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly. He launches no grim prohibitions. If He makes us free, we are free indeed. He could not save Himself, but He *saves* others. The Christian goal is that Kingdom which our Lord Himself sometimes likened to a banquet. It is a city of jewels, full of music, wherein is no more pain and all tears are wiped away. But the Christian Faith beholds the world as men have made it, and it declares that from such a world, the path to the Kingdom of God must be marked with a blood-track.

He who died at Calvary had acknowledged to Pilate that He was a King; but He could never become King of the world and of the heart of man by behaving as an ordinary monarch or even as an ordinary man. The only way to His Kingdom was the way He trod. And until His Kingdom come, there is no follower of His who will not find himself, sometimes, literally upon that same road.

Always the faithful must be prepared to strike that difficult trail. And by some, greatly tested, greatly privileged, it must be trodden as their only road, with no smoother pathway ever to be found leading in the same direction. The martyrs and the missionaries, slum priests, those who give their lives for the outcast, those who in holy poverty pray always for the world—these are not the enemies of society. They are the leaders of the armies of friendship. They do not waste life—they *give* it, for the good of all. And they must give heroically, stupendously, because this world is in danger. It is the world in which God might not walk in safety. And these, who seem to the eyes of worldliness to have sacrificed too much, do but follow the Maker of the mountains and the stars, the Wielder of winds and tides, Who taketh up the isles as a very little thing—Who once lay helpless upon a maiden's breast, and once again upon a Roman cross.

V

THE FINISHED WORK

The Gospel records appear, at first sight, not to agree as to what were the last words uttered by our Lord upon the Cross. St Mark and St Matthew describe Him uttering, at the last moment, a loud cry. St Luke also mentions this cry, but adds that it was followed by the words: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The Fourth Gospel says nothing of a cry, but states that immediately before His death, Jesus said, "It is finished." A little examination, however, may show that the apparent diversity of testimony here is really only a slight one. The loud cry mentioned by the Synoptists was not necessarily an inarticulate utterance. The Fourth Gospel, as we have previously seen, contains in its closing chapters the evidence of an eye-witness, and it may well have been that one standing near-by heard in that loud cry a clear and intelligible word.

There is one piece of observation in the Johannine record which seems to prove beyond reasonable doubt that this description of the crucifixion comes from one who was close at hand. The reference to the vessel, the stoup, full of sour wine, standing near the Cross, could scarcely have been made by one who had not actually seen it there. It is a

circumstantial detail which seems to convey its own self-evidence, and gives high probability to the argument that the person who noticed this may be trusted when he tells us, even though his evidence is not precisely reiterated by the other narratives, that immediately before He died, our Lord said, "It is finished." And if this saying was loudly uttered, so that those standing some distance off heard "a loud voice," this may have some influence upon our interpretation of its meaning.

The fact that the Fourth Gospel does not include the saying reported in Luke: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," need not mean that this is an untrustworthy addition provided by some pious hand to counterbalance the cry of forsakenness. A very small and reasonable exercise of imagination will solve many such problems. We have to conceive the actual scene at the Cross: the weeping Mother, the beloved young disciple by her side, both watching with painful attention the Sufferer in His Passion, but both grief-stricken and overwhelmed. If, as may be, St Luke derived some parts of his narrative from Mary herself, or from those who had received the story from her, we may have an indication that at the last dread moment, when the loud cry had stunned the heart of John, her eyes remained upon her Son, and she heard Him murmur a final word, commending His spirit to His Father. Certainly, these words of committal have a sublime fitness, following the pregnant cry: "It is finished."

It may be objected that to attribute any profound meaning to that cry is unjustifiable: that it was no more than an exclamation of relief, coming from one

who had endured hours of torture and knew that the end was fast approaching. What was finished, according to this view, was the mere pain, and the cry might have been uttered by anyone in such circumstances. But beyond any *a priori* argument as to what these words may have meant, there are certain intensely interesting considerations which tend to suggest that they cannot have signified a grateful relapse into the stupor of death. If the utterance be identified with the " loud cry " of the Synoptists, it would seem more like a shout of triumph than the last, vague whisper of a clouding mind. And that it certainly may have been spoken with a final rally of physical resources, may be seen from the agreement of three narratives as to what had just previously occurred. In order to appreciate this, it is necessary to observe our Lord's behaviour throughout the period of His final ordeal.

It is recorded in Mark and Matthew that at an early stage of the proceedings He had been offered wine mingled, according to Mark, with myrrh, and according to Matthew with " gall." St Luke also appears to refer to this incident, but he does not say that the wine was mixed. St Matthew's account is supposed to imply that the soldiers mocked Him by offering Him some vile potation. Certainly He is said to have tasted it, and refused to drink. It is by no means certain, however, that the Matthean account must be so interpreted. St Luke places the offering of wine in close juxtaposition with the mocking, but even here it would be unsafe to infer that the drink itself was an insult. For St Mark makes it plain that what was offered was drugged

wine, a provision of mercy intended to deaden the pain. St Mark says nothing of our Lord tasting the drink; but it may be that St Matthew's statement is quite correct—that He did taste it, and refused it, not because He found it unpleasant, but because He recognized it for what it was. At all events, He would not drink it, and the only conclusion to be drawn is that He was unwilling to escape the pangs of crucifixion by such aid. His definite purpose was to endure the worst. His conduct proves that He passed through the dreadful hours with a clear consciousness. His words to the dying thief, to His Mother, to St John, are sufficient evidence of this.

But toward the end, as Mark, Matthew and John agree, when His physical resources must have been approaching exhaustion, the soldiers once more offered Him wine. Here again we have evidence that the narrative in the Fourth Gospel comes from one who was in the near vicinity. Mark and Matthew state that the wine was administered by means of a sponge, placed upon a reed. The Fourth Gospel says that it was placed upon "a hyssop"—a particular kind of reed, which could be noticed only by someone standing close at hand. But the point is that this was not the drugged draught which had been previously offered. It was simply "wine"—the "common wine" of the military ration. It was given in response to our Lord's complaint of thirst—another touch of reality found in the Fourth Gospel alone.

Now, there is no suggestion that this drink was refused, and the Fourth Gospel says distinctly that

our Lord received it. It was refreshment, in the strength of which the energies of the Saviour were rallied for that cry which now ceases to suggest a merely natural satisfaction at the passing of the torment, and takes on the character of a tremendous and triumphant declaration. The end came swiftly after this—the soldiers found Jesus dead while the two thieves still lived. Indeed, it would seem that our Lord did not die of sheer, lingering agony, but that the immediate physical cause produced its effect with suddenness. Therefore, in view of all the considerations, it is no idle guesswork to conclude that when the Lord cried from His Cross, "It is finished," He cried consciously as the Redeemer of man, knowing the mighty import of that moment: knowing that with this word He was announcing a new foundation for the world. And if it is true that His own purpose brought Him to Calvary, it was His to declare that the purpose had been achieved.

The loud cry, "It is finished," immediately preceded the committal of Himself to His Father, and His death. The more one considers the ministry and teaching which had issued in this crucifixion, the more one recalls the definite announcements of impending tragedy and the direct association of this sacrifice with the coming of the Kingdom, the stronger grows the conviction that this cry did, indeed, refer to an actual work there and then consummated, and not merely to such cessation of pain in death as might cause any man to be grateful. The Man upon the Cross asks for one last, strengthening draught of this world's wine, and then raises

His voice, crying out upon a majestic consummation. In this solemn shout of victory there is an impressiveness immeasurably more profound than would have been any gesture of revolt against the Cross. Here is more than purpose. Vast accomplishment is here, and some irrevocable finality. Here and now something is done, which can never again be undone. A task has been finished. A situation has been permanently established. The helpless hands had wrought a deed of immense crisis. The pierced feet had reached a goal. But the Lord spoke no more to men, ere He passed through the gates of death. He could point to no particular policy or reform, no legal enactment, no fruitful invention, no deed of visible discovery or conflict, and say: "This is my work." Yet something was finished. He did not give it a name. It was a thing so large that only the onward, exploring experience of mankind can rightly appreciate it.

For a generation past, the modern world has suffered from a strange mental debility. It has found itself increasingly unable to appreciate, or even to believe in, permanence; and this has been exhibited in certain philosophies of movement and change which have discarded all notions of teleology. Heraclitus has returned, with larger implications than of old, and men have learned to see the world and all things as ever moving, a ceaseless, aimless flux. They have lost grip upon the truth that a thing may be done once for all, and that its effects may for ever remain. Yet it would seem that the diversion of a river's course is a deed of such permanent consequence. Movement and permanence

are not incompatible notions, if the permanent element be that of aim and direction. The weakness of the modern habit of mind is that it fails to trust even such permanence.

No doubt two influences have been at work to produce this result. The rapid changes in modern life, due to the applications of science, have created the illusion that the world and its history are no more than a kaleidoscope. And in the second place, vague ideas about the doctrine of evolution have produced the judgment that " change " is the master-word for the interpretation of life. Probably there was never an age in which the daily life of man was so lacking in stability of use and habit as it now is. Decade differs from decade in method and appearance as widely as century has hitherto differed from century. And not only do crazes, flippant fashions, fleeting whims, beset the minds of the multitude, but in the more serious realms of ethical conduct, sanctions are abandoned on the ground that permanence is no more to be found in moral principles than in methods of manufacture or modes of amusement.

Obviously, however, the result of such assumptions must be either a feather-brained frivolity, or a deep-seated pessimism; for mere change in itself is meaningless and utterly sterile, and a much less respectable thing even than mere stolidity. If mankind changed not at all, it might be assumed that it had power to appreciate its enduring situation. But if it does nothing but change, the conclusion is that it has power to appreciate nothing. If a sanction or habit or method is accepted only

because it is new, it need be no better than what it displaces. It may be worse. But, indeed, there is no "better" and no "worse." There is only a flying wheel; and we are back with all the dreary and disillusioned philosophers of the various paganisms. There is only one consideration that may give value to the idea of change, and that is the belief that change is no master, but a servant, and that it may be governed by direction. For it requires no very deep insight to behold the truth that if we are to be always moving, we must either know whither we are moving, or go mad.

Now, since man is organic with the contingent, phenomenal universe, it is certain that the ultimate principle of directivity which must govern change, cannot arise from his volition. Since, however, he has real volition and rises above the world of nature, it is equally true that he possesses some power of directivity; but it follows that the only successful employment thereof will be in accordance with the creative volition of which he is an effect. In other words, in so far as he has power to produce changes and control their direction, his movement will be disastrous unless it accords with the ultimate directivity which God intends to minister through human agency.

That is to say, change may be real, and may be ruinous. Human volition may produce movement which is movement toward the edge of a precipice. Human judgment may become so warped as to conclude that some particular line of motion is progress, merely because in the process of change some additional ease or pleasure accrues. But the

Christian philosophy, while entirely compatible with a dynamic conception of man's existence, urges always a close scrutiny and discrimination of the road. Indeed, the conception of movement, racial and historical, is close to the genius of the Faith; but if Christians have learned to think of life as a road, they have been taught also that there are two possible roads. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The Christian conception of change, therefore, involves a critical judgment of any particular directivity exerted by man; and Christian philosophy, from this starting-point, proceeds to the conclusion that human directivity is radically vitiated. Behind the given possibility of change, there is an unalterable decision as to the effect of any particular change, of the destination reached by any particular line of advance. In the realm of moral and spiritual activity, no finally illuminating illustrations are to be drawn from Einstein. The broad and the narrow paths never meet. Action is real. Change is real. But they involve unremitting choice and ceaseless rejection of real alternatives. They involve the persistent committal of self and society to ends. The will may work for blessing or cursing; and such is the situation of mankind, that if one seem to retire from the labour of choice, and to drift upon the tide of circumstance, this also is the choice of evil destiny. For Swinburne's thanks to the unknown gods were entirely misplaced — "That even the

weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea." Man is not the river, but the voyager. He may have mistaken the very name of the river, and it may be hurrying him to reefs and whirlpools. Tennyson's words are immeasurably truer:

> It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
> It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles. . . .

But unless our faces are set toward the Islands of the Blest, disaster will assuredly be our lot.

If we have elected or consented to move otherwise than in accordance with the divine purpose, toward some other goal than the one, abiding City of God, regardless of that unfaltering decision as to what the life of the Blessed Trinity requires of a finite, personal-social being, then the changes we cause will indicate no true progress, however vast may grow our experiment, however specious the appearance of our success. Change then becomes only a method of dissolution and collapse. The years will pass, the centuries will wing their way, civilizations will rise, and boast themselves, and fall. Things will go on. Inventions will be sought out. Discoveries will accumulate. Life will grow more and more complex, gathering and controlling the forces of nature. And always the end will be preparing—the end of confusion, ruin and dismay. For love and fellowship and humility have not been present to guide and control the changes, and the catastrophe must come—unless in His unaccountable mercy, God intervene, somehow, to create a new situation.

Our faith is that the life and death of Jesus of

Nazareth were central and critical for the world's history, because thereby was effected precisely such divine intervention. When the last moment was approaching, our Lord cried with a loud voice: "It is finished." And what was finished may now be suggested in a few words, even though ages may not be sufficient for its exploration. He had revealed the actual direction of man's life as utterly perilous, showing that the world's will was energizing toward the world's self-destruction, since it had proceeded to destroy God Incarnate, and thus had exhibited itself as antagonizing its own Foundation. He had vicariously suffered that the Divine life of the Blessed Trinity might emerge amongst men, and had thus performed for God a new task. He had thus opened a way of reconciliation, doing for our race what it could in nowise do for itself. But He has also revealed the permanence of love. The divine activity brought Him to the Cross, rather than behold man's ultimate loss. He had set forth the immolation of Deity for humanity, not as a myth or as an ideal conception, but as a deed within our history. And finally, He had set forth the mode of human reconstruction. Men must come with Him, and must come all the way with Him, if they would win home.

This divine deed is necessarily more than an incident. Its occurrence in the world, and the fact that it is the Act of God, constitute a counteraction of true directivity against the false; but it achieves its end only in so far as man's action now becomes organically associated with God's. The static legalism which could assume that a "transaction"

between the Father and the Incarnate Son had somehow saved men, or perhaps only some selected men, apart from the exercise of their will, and without a revolutionary change of outlook and purpose, is completely outmoded. We may not come down from the cross until we have fulfilled the sufferings of Christ. This religion of the Cross will retain no reality in isolation from the whole field of human behaviour. The Apocalyptic Kingdom comes not until we are crucified *with Christ*. The assumption that Christ could die, that His blood-stained and fading face could look upon us from Calvary, and leave no awful onus upon us, is an appalling misconception. That He bore our sins upon the tree is a command from the heart of God that we shall join Him in this mighty renunciation and reversal. The notion that Christ brings us release from the cross is one to which the words of Ibsen's *Brand* are justly applicable:

> Ye will but laugh and love and play,
> A little doctrine take on trust,
> And all the bitter burden thrust
> On One who came, ye have been told,
> And from your shoulders took away
> Your great transgressions manifold.
> He bore for you the cross, the lance—
> Ye therefore have full leave to dance ;
> Dance then—but where your dancing ends
> Is quite another thing, my friends !

Our Lord did not die to sanction our pursuit of the very motive which killed Him. He died to draw us into a revolution which cannot be consummated

until it have convulsed us with penitence and set our feet in the way of willing sacrifice.

"It is finished." An abiding, undeviating claim has been set up in this world—the claim of God for the soul's utter sacrifice of self: not in some insulated sphere of pious emotion, but throughout the entire realm of the self's operation. And no man, glancing toward the Cross, can ever again be entirely at peace with himself in seeking to evade the Cross. The evangelical message is the message of peace, and of joy beyond the measure of all pagan revels. But its boon lies upon the further side of a revolutionary act in which every soul of man must participate.

The finished work of Calvary, therefore, does not allow of less than a reversal of the human motive in each one of us; but it is the sure pledge of ineffable inward peace to those who accept it, because it is the genuine revelation of the supreme and ultimate directivity, by union with which we find easeful calm in and through the most exacting service, and discover unspeakable riches by means of fullest self-giving. But it follows that those interpretations of the Faith which discover the whole scope of the Cross in the reconstituting of the soul's private relation with God, fall seriously short. For if it be a question of the redirection of human activity, it seems that the social interpretation of salvation must be basic, and its corporate significance can never rightly be ignored. One conclusion from such premises is that the historic Church is of theological necessity; but it follows, further, that the Church itself must accept the

practical issue, that since the full effect of the Cross is a social effect, it must be a *thoroughly* social effect, and the Church is bound to seek a social order which shall express the will of man revolutionized and redirected by the immovable, irrevocable Cross of Christ.

This will mean that while the Faith involves large and disturbing changes in the modern world, its principle of revolution contains also, within itself, a principle of conservatism. The Cross is not only a weapon of assault: it is a shield of defence. It demands action, but it provides a standard of direction. Thus, to some recommendations for "advance" and "progress" offered in our age, the Faith must always cause the Church to return what may appear to be a reactionary *non possumus*. It must oppose, for example, such regimentation of human life as is at present making for the destruction of real activity in the individual, since this is to make the Cross of Christ of none effect for men. It must oppose an increasingly mechanical social mode, insisting that man is created for spiritual intercourse, and that the response to the Divine Activity is due from every heart. It must oppose such dreams of Eugenism as look for the management of the most intimate human relations by experts, basing their decisions upon purely positivist and naturalist conceptions. It will always demand freedom for the soul to take up the cross—the last, divine dignity of our fallen manhood.

But upon the other hand, the Faith will oppose just as strenuously the a-moralism of those who worship the individual as an end in himself. If

the Cross is the permanent defence of the individual, it is also the permanent defence of society. If God has died for man, the superman who can live only for himself is a shabby little figure. If Christ chose one straitened and stony path, the minor poets and second-rate novelists who invite us to "live out all our possibilities at all costs," are muttering dark ruin. The "progress" which consists of dissolving social loyalty when it becomes irksome, and escaping social burdens when they grow heavy: the kind of progress aptly illustrated by the modern adventure of divorce, is condemned by the Sign of the Figure of God, nailed to the Tree of the World, in a terrible and ruthless loyalty to the disloyal.

Thus the Cross stands as a defence against the onslaught of theories and fashions which seek either to depress the significance of a person, or to release him from the perpetual service of the common good. By reference to that revelation and accomplishment of God, Christians may measure the proposals and whims which rise from the restless, wandering minds of men. But the Church, by that same loyalty, relying upon that same dogma, is involved in a vastly greater operation than the criticism of suggestions for departure from the present social order. If the Church is the most resolutely conservative institution in the world: if it persists in testing all policies and doctrines by an event which happened nearly two thousand years ago, it is because that event sanctions and inspires the supreme, final, and universal revolution. The notion of the Church as the buttress of the estab-

lished order is one which is no longer fairly justified. There are plain and authoritative statements which make that old assumption grossly unjust if it is now persisted in. The Gospel, the Sacraments and the Creeds have always implied a very different order; and the signs now indicate that the Church is increasingly aware that between the underlying assumptions of capitalist industrialism, and the first principles of the Faith, there is a broad and abrupt cleavage.

Clearly, the intervention of the divine activity, displayed in the Sacrifice of Christ, necessitates that for those who accept it, the dominant motive in all human association shall be sacrificial. The fundamental notion of privilege must appear unchristian. The conception of business for profits as its main object must appear unchristian. A system which *depends* upon poverty and unemployment must appear unchristian. To seek in any way to establish one's security and comfort at the cost of deprivation of others: to live for any purpose other than that of sustained service, is to desert the standard of the Faith. This implies co-operation as the social method, and a conception of fellowship in equality which must be extended beyond political theory to industrial and economic fact.

The Christian mind looks to a society of cross-bearers. And while the Christian motive suffers contradiction in this world, it is forbidden to us to come down from the cross to scuffle with the enemy and to fight him with his own weapons. The Cross of Christ is the indestructible witness

to the divine method. The Christian enterprise seeks universal peace; and He who is our peace, and " hath broken down the middle wall of partition," bids us break all sundering and estranging barriers by the power of that great love whereby God entered this world and reached even us.

One final standard the finished work of Christ establishes. There are seasons when the bravest and best of disciples grow weary of the world's hardness and moral stupidity. Its selfishness sometimes seems impregnable, and the human race past praying for. The greed of men, their silly quarrelsomeness, their goatish lusts, appear entirely disgusting, and one may be tempted to turn away in despair, to cultivate one's own garden and one's own soul. But the garden grows horribly lonesome, and the soul wretchedly narrow! There is no ease and refreshment, no assurance of life's dignity, that way. For better or worse we are joined to our brethren; and when we kneel in solitude to pray, there rises before us the vision of that Great Brother, Who died because He would not give up the souls of men. It is because the Eternal Father looks upon His wounds, that there is hope for any man. From His lips there rang the cry in the gathering darkness, " It is finished." There is now no turning back of the divine purpose for the world. The Kingdom of Grace is founded amongst men. There is no other way for men of goodwill, but to abide with Christ in His search for sinners, until His Kingdom come.

PART III

THE RESULTS OF THE PASSION

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.—St Luke xii. 32.

I

THE CONQUEST OF THE WORLD

The divine activity did not manifest itself only for a season, display its nature, and then withdraw itself from the world of men, leaving humanity as it had found it. It did not remain only as a memory. It came to abide within the race. It was associated in closest intimacy with the race. God was made man. He took manhood to the Cross, and into the tomb. And the whole Christian Faith and philosophy is involved in the belief that He brought manhood out of the tomb, and carried it to the everlasting throne. The Passion and the Resurrection of our Lord are mutually interpretative.

Mr H. G. Wells has said that we "cannot accept the Resurrection as though it were an afterthought to a bitterly felt death." The suggestion seems to be that the Church has indulged in a purely imaginary compensation for the defeat of the Cross. It is, of course, psychologically impossible that any such self-delusion could have sustained itself under the rude test of real circumstance; but Mr Wells reveals again, in these words, his misconception of the Cross. If the death of Jesus had been the defeat of one who had set out to conquer the world by the world's weapons, we might agree that the Resurrection could have been only an afterthought.

The difficulty still would be to conceive anyone proclaiming such an afterthought, when to do so was to risk speedy imprisonment, social ostracism, and perhaps death. And, indeed, there is the prior difficulty of explaining how an afterthought so wildly improbable could occur to the members of a forlorn and disillusioned company, chiefly concerned to keep themselves out of danger's way.

But if the death of Jesus was the act of God, bearing the directivity of human action and opposing to it action of entirely different direction, the Resurrection is seen to have been no " afterthought," but the mighty assertion that the divine purpose was not defeated or destroyed by death. When the fierce tides of human selfishness had spent themselves in such destruction as they could accomplish, the calm current of God's creative love continued to assert itself. Within the human race He had suffered the brunt of human hate. Still within the race, He declared the deathlessness of divine love; and in the bruised and broken body which men had nailed to the cross, He arose from the strait bonds of death and cried " All hail! "

The Resurrection of our Lord in the body which had suffered upon the Cross was a doctrine which the minimizing and anæmic fashion of theological liberalism found embarrassing, if not offensive; and throughout the nineteenth century numerous attempts were made to preserve what was called the " spiritual truth " enshrined in the Gospel narratives, while discarding those elements which were supposed to be merely legendary. The various theorists did not achieve unanimity even as to what was the

spiritual truth and what was legend. The explanation of their failure is to be found in the difficulty of denying that the whole New Testament record, and all Apostolic reflection, are emphatic in proclaiming that the chief " spiritual " truth is that our Lord's body emerged from the grave. To misunderstand the vast implications of that assertion is to misunderstand the Faith.

One might manufacture a religion which would teach that our Lord's body remained buried; but, were it to work out all its implications, it would reveal itself as other than the Christian religion. It might seem to coincide with the Catholic Faith at a hundred points; but at length the concealed divergence must display itself. For the bodily Resurrection of Christ belongs to that objectivity of revelation which involves a redeemed society. It is linked with Sacrament, and Order, and visible Kingdom. A personal experience may have a truly objective reference, though it be private and unshared by any other human being. But an objectivity which is shared and common is necessary for a church, for a history, for a world-kingdom, and the divine activity, declaring its unbroken purpose, employed the objective medium of the body which men had killed. The very body whereon human action had displayed itself in all its evil quality, became the means of declaring the undefeated will to redeem.

The attempts to " spiritualize " the Resurrection narratives in the New Testament are thus convicted of occupying a false starting-point. But they have reached no conclusion carrying any consensus of acceptance; and perhaps the most convincing reply

to them is simply to state them in their ingenious multiplicity. It then becomes apparent that they are ingenious and multiplex because they are all wrestling hopelessly with the same intractable testimony. The critical schools have attacked the traditional belief because the narratives contain some amount of discrepancy in their accounts of our Lord's Resurrection appearances; but upon the chief question they find themselves always confronted with the solid fact that the four Gospels are in complete agreement. There is no discrepancy upon the point that the tomb in which the dead body of Jesus was placed, was discovered, upon the third day, to be empty. That, at all events, is the assertion of the four Evangelists; and this agreement has to be explained.

Reimarus volunteered to account for the consensus of testimony by the theory that the Apostles were all involved in an act of desperate deceit. They stole the body, and pretended that Jesus had risen, in order that they might still carry on their trade as religious teachers. Now, in view of the whole evidence, almost any theory which accepts the empty tomb as a fact is more to be respected than those which ask us to believe that the Church could have grown up in Jerusalem with the body of Jesus still in the grave. But the suggestion that the frightened and bewildered disciples stole the body, in order to carry on a trade which was likely to be extremely dangerous, is too naïve for consideration. And the notion that the vast structure of the historic Church, and the mighty works of the Faith, are based upon a cheap and foolish fraud, lacks all sense of moral reality.

Otto Holtzmann improved upon Reimarus, with the suggestion that Joseph of Arimathea had moved the body, that the disciples were ignorant of this and immediately proclaimed that Jesus had risen. But this quite unjustly assumes that Joseph of Arimathea was an idiot—for no weaker word will describe a person who allows wildly false stories to be circulated, to the misleading of thousands of inoffensive people and to the disturbance of the public peace, when the easy disproof of them is in his own hands. Such conduct would be traitorous at once both to the authorities in Jerusalem and to the followers of Jesus. There is, however, not the slightest shred of evidence that Joseph of Arimathea moved the body. And there is no evidence that the disciples jumped swiftly to the conclusion that our Lord had risen. They appear to have been very slow to believe it—as any ordinary company of men would have been.

The theory that Jesus did not die, but merely swooned upon the Cross and afterwards recovered consciousness in the cool tomb, a product of eighteenth-century rationalism, has been the theme of some literary romances. It was advanced by Hase, however, as a serious critical account. But it is an account which immediately disproves itself. For while it offers the possibility of subsequent appearances, it leaves in complete mystery the origin of the triumphant sense of victory with which the Resurrection filled the Church. How Jesus, with torn and shattered body, crawling half-alive from the jaws of the grave, could burst the seal, escape the watch, and proceed to convince a number

of people that He was the Conqueror of death, it is simply impossible to imagine. And it is equally impossible to conceive how the disciples disposed of Jesus after His escape, in such wise as to allow of their proclaiming in a few weeks that He had not only risen, but ascended. Indeed, the conclusion of a shrewd judgment would be that if anything could have stopped the mouths of the disciples for ever, it would have been just such a pitiable anti-climax as that which Hase and others have suggested to account for their confident assertions.

These theories, absurd as they are, were put forward by scholars who believed that the tomb was empty; and their very absurdity shows how strongly their authors felt that the empty tomb was a fact not to be evaded. They preferred to run to these fantastic extremes of speculation, rather than adopt what they considered to be the impossible expedient of denying that there was an empty tomb to be explained. But the theories themselves prove how difficult it is, on that ground, to provide a reasonable alternative to the conclusion that an actual resurrection occurred. These are the alternative suggestions of keen, critical brains—to say that is to say enough.

It is not surprising, therefore, that some should clutch the other horn of the dilemma, and assume that no matter what experiences came to the followers of Jesus after His death, they could have had no connection with any bodily appearance; and that our Lord's body lay undisturbed where it had been buried. Thus Renan suggested that the appearances were visionary. Visions, whatever may

be their value, are not rare phenomena in times of religious and emotional stress. These probably began with the women, and since visions may become contagious through suggestion, were communicated to the rest of the disciple-circle. But the psychology of this thesis is all wrong. Visions are not vouchsafed to the already crushed and disillusioned. They have no will to behold the self-accomplishment and objectification of their hopes and dreams. They have parted with their dreams. It is those who have some will to act, who see beckoning visions ready to sanction their endeavour. The disciples had no more will to act than so many scattered sheep.

Keim constructed a theory psychologically and theologically stronger, when he supposed that the experiences were actually produced upon the minds of the disciples by our Lord who was now in "the higher world of spirits." It is impossible to deny that such appearances would possess "reality"; but how far it would be a reality of social significance is a difficult question. We are bound to suppose that *percipi* is not the whole of *esse:* that a phenomenon is more than its perception by a finite mind. One phenomenon may be perceived by many minds, and this gives a world which is a social medium. But such appearances as Keim suggests might be conveyed to many minds individually, with no social medium; and at all events, if they possessed "reality" originating from beyond the consciousness of their perceivers, it would be a reality outside that given scheme with which human history is concerned, and which God entered by

incarnation. The point is not that the disciples of Jesus were truly and sufficiently convinced that He still lived, but that He still lived in such manner as to be visible and tangible to human sense, and somehow in relation with the world of history.

The theory now chiefly current amongst those who deny the physical resurrection, is that the appearances of our Lord were genuine mystical experiences upon the part of the disciples. This conception may be traced to Martineau, who supposed that there had been a misconception as to the meaning of certain mystical utterances of the disciples concerning union with Christ. As for Martineau, it may be pointed out that if such misconception arose, and was incorporated in the New Testament, this happened while some of the Apostles were still living. But further, St Paul, who makes emphatic assertions about mystical union with Christ, never confuses that experience with the appearance of Christ upon the Damascus Road, which he classes with the Resurrection appearances.

The later developments of the " mystical " hypothesis argue that the records display two noteworthy features in the appearances: They were of vocational purpose, and they were witnessed only by believers. It is held that these features establish their purely " mystical " character. Obviously they do nothing of the sort, and the argument is merely the fallacy of the " undistributed middle." There is no proof that bodily appearances might not be vocational, and might not, for sufficient reasons, be confined to believers. It is not even true that the records do confine them to believers, for we have to

remember the incident of St Thomas, who, apparently, was not a mystic! But the theory requires us to suppose, what we should not otherwise have imagined, that the disciples were people of advanced mystical development; and further, that upon one occasion five hundred such mystics were assembled together.

In one important respect, the most serious and devout theory of "mystical" appearances is worthy of no more serious consideration than the theory of hallucinations. The case is very simple. Within a short space of time the Christian leaders were in collision with the authorities. St Peter's speech at Pentecost had made it plain that the new movement was impelled by the faith that Jesus who had been crucified had risen from the dead; and the authorities resolved to stamp out the troublesome and dangerous sect. We are asked to believe that the Church could have flourished and grown in Jerusalem in such circumstances, while the body of Jesus lay all the while in a tomb the situation of which was quite well known to the officials. Reimarus, indeed, with his acceptance of the Jewish story of a theft, is nearest of all critical theorists to historical probability, if we can overlook the vast moral improbability of his suggestion.

But even thus, Reimarus is unlikely enough. The Jewish story has no cogency, even if we suppose that the disciples were capable of fraudulent action; for the difficulty of stealing a body from a sealed tomb, without waking a single soldier of the watch, and disposing of it in such fashion as to avoid all discovery, would have been tremendous. The

difficulty of keeping the secret in face of fierce persecution, would have been equally great. And finally, the difficulty of persuading the intelligence of Saul of Tarsus to accept a story for which the characters of the narrators, as he must have discerned them, would then have provided no evidence, seems utterly to preclude the possibility of the tomb being empty by any sort of guile. The assertion of the Jewish authorities had to be backed by a highly suspicious willingness of a number of soldiers to confess that they were not doing their duty at the critical moment. It may be completely dismissed. There remains only the possibility of some extraordinary misunderstanding: and we can only say that, if misunderstanding it was, it has defied the critical examination of the world's most acute minds to analyse: it provided a belief which so fits with the conception of the Incarnation as to belong to its very genius; and it has supported a mighty and world-invading Faith through nineteen long centuries.

Doubts and alternative theories concerning our Lord's Resurrection, no matter how honest, arise not only from obsession by naturalistic philosophies, but also from a misconception of the nature and meaning of the Christian revelation. That revelation was a cosmic activity. It was an invasion of human history by a Divine Person. It was not simply an illustration of the divine, but the irruption of the divine, in strong labour for the salvation of a race in real danger. Its purpose was not merely the winning of souls by a vision of God, but the reconstruction of mankind. And thus not even the

Resurrection is to be understood apart from two associated facts. The first is the fact of the Ascension, and the second is the fact of the sacramental Church. It is in the consideration of Resurrection, Ascension, and Sacrificial Communion, issuing as results of the Passion, that the creative revolution of the Christian Faith is finally to be understood.

Had the Resurrection appearances of our Lord simply ceased, they might have constituted a problem for the Church. True, the evidence would always have precluded their being explained as phantasmal; but their cessation might have led to uneasy speculation. The Church would have been faced with the questions: What had become of Jesus in His Resurrection body? What was now His cosmic place? And even the events of Pentecost might have been difficult to interpret.

But there is no such confusing hiatus in Christian narrative and doctrine. The Apostles saw our Lord ascend. There is not the slightest intelligible reason for rejecting the story. It involves much mystery; but fortunately we have long since escaped the naïve negations of rationalism, and there is an increasing readiness to agree that a religion with no mystery in it is no religion for reasonable men. Religion without a supernatural element becomes, not "natural," but unnatural.

It is useless, of course, to speculate as to the process whereby a visible body should pass into a world invisible, or as to what changes this might involve.[1] But since science now asserts that the

[1] This had happened, of course, in some manner, with our Lord's body before His Ascension.

basis of all visible bodies is invisible, and that matter is a mode of energy, the difficulty obviously cannot be said to be that of conceiving the self-contradictory. Perhaps it consists merely in conceiving the reversal of a normal process. But the problem is only an instance of the general problem of the miraculous; and belief in the unique irruption of the supernatural in the Christian revelation seems to carry at least the probability of miraculous events. We see to-day that to deny the possibility of miracle merely amounts to the crude assertion that human experience, analysed and classified as scientific law, is an experience of the totality of cosmic forces and of all reality: which is manifestly illogical.

The story of the Ascension is told with great restraint and with a complete absence of extravagant marvel and of any element of the grotesque. And however we interpret or explain the actual manner of the event, the conviction remains that these men had witnessed something profoundly impressive, deeply satisfying and reassuring. They were convinced, once for all, that the Master they had known and loved was now the Master of all things: glorified, exalted, enthroned in power, so that they could say of Him that He was Judge and Lord and King. They could now declare that the whole of human life was His rightful province: that He was the revealed ground of authority, the true and abiding centre of human loyalty and cohesion, the Leader of men and nations.

Now, this inevitably carries a dogmatic declaration concerning human existence. We have seen that no ground of optimism regarding the human destiny

is to be reached by a thorough-going application of evolutionary doctrine to man's nature. The human species may be merely a species. It may be surpassed by some higher order upon the earth. It may even conceivably split into distinct species, as the fertile imagination of Mr Wells described in that fascinating and horrible romance, *The Time Machine*. But the Christian Faith, proclaiming moral freedom and actual disaster, proclaims also the Divine Revolution, the emergence of the personal presence and action of God within the human race, to reverse the human course and turn the tide of events. And although moral freedom remains with man, the Ascension provides the foundation of a mighty and mystical hope, in the assertion that the divine activity, passing eventually beyond this sphere, carried human nature to the throne of God.

Therefore we may not speak of God as possibly "scrapping" humanity, since man now sits for ever upon the topmost seat of the universe, and human nature is anchored and grounded within the very life of God. The world has never heard a more daring doctrine of humanism than this, which is the root of Christian optimism about mankind. This high doctrine is the supreme sanction of all noble politics, of all cleansing pity, of all missionary adventure. There is One Who "pleads with man's voice by the marvellous sea," and is still "our kinsman"—the kinsman of Hottentots and hooligans, of millionaires and Communists, the kinsman of profiteers and painted ladies, and of all the world's bewildered sons and daughters. The Son of our

Sister Mary is at the right hand of God; and all who share human nature are linked with Him in a mystical solidarity—at whatever cost to Him. Within the Holy of Holies, within the very Heart of God, He offers for all the sins of men His great Sacrifice. From that fact, since He has gone back to His Father bearing our manhood, the modern world with its secular lusts is still unseparated.

But the Ascension carries a further implication. It makes an assertion, startling and revolutionary, concerning the very nature of Eternal God, and one which is entirely subversive of ordinary human assumptions and standards. Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of the Most High—to supreme and universal power and dominion, in such wise that His judgment is identified with the eternal and absolute judgment. We have to consider that this was He who was cradled in a manger. His was the "face loved of little children long ago." He worked as a carpenter: had not where to lay His head: said to a woman who was a sinner, "Go in peace and sin no more": said to us all, "Forgive your enemies, bless them that curse you." He was betrayed by a false friend: received in silence the abuse and mockery of worthless judges: was thrown as waste and lumber out of the world, His body beaten and crushed, bloody and disfigured. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He saved others, Himself He could not save. It is He Who is upon the throne. In other words, it is this that He shows us, that is the ultimate foundation and the determinative force of the whole universe.

We know the greedy ambitions of men, their itching pride, their gloating love of possessions. We know their conception of power, and how they measure success. We know how they base authority upon force, upon the ability to smash and silence opposition. We know what man has enthroned in this world as the arbiters and criteria of life: Mammon and self and physical might. The Ascension is God's declaration that when all the noise of our fear and hate and boasting is ended, it is Jesus of the Smitten Mouth who will have the last word. It is meekness, gentleness, patience, that will remain. It is sacrificial love that is of everlasting royalty.

After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven . . . and immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold a throne was set in heaven . . . and I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and in the midst of the elders, stood *a lamb, as it had been slain.*

It is with this primeval, inexhaustible, self-giving Love that human activity must make terms. It is to this that our politics and economics must be addressed, for this is the root of all reality. Either the life of our race will proceed in its opposition and distortion, to unspeakable pain and woe; or it will return, converted, mounting with the divine activity to that high throne where sits the eternal Humility, and in its onward sweep transforming the face of the earth, abolishing war, injustice and oppression, and learning that Holy Communion which is the ever-blessed life of God.

The Divine Revolution is not complete, however, in our Lord's carrying of manhood to the heavenly

seats, even though the souls of men are thereby drawn at last, beyond this world, to a heaven of bliss. Since it is a revolution of the social against the unsocial, of love against self, to secure an appropriate effect within mankind it must become the basis of a new society. The Church, therefore, is a necessary effect of the Passion, and an essential feature of the Christian revelation. It is the Gift of God, bestowed by a pierced hand, built by His risen life, maintained by His exalted power, consolidated by the spirit of His love—the earthly counterpart of that humanity which He has glorified above. This truth remains, in spite of the shocking and sickening sins which have been perpetrated in the Church's name. A new principle of fellowship, a supernatural basis of society, has appeared in history, and remains. Perhaps no words of deeper truth have been written upon this subject than those which close Sir J. R. Seeley's volume, *Ecce Homo*.

The creative effort which produced that against which, it is said, the gates of hell shall not prevail, cannot be analysed. No architect's designs were furnished for the New Jerusalem, no committee drew up rules for the Universal Commonwealth. . . . The inconceivable work was done in calmness ; before the eyes of men it was noiselessly accomplished, attracting little attention. Who can describe that which unites men? Who has entered into the formation of speech which is the symbol of their union? Who can describe exhaustively the origin of civil society? He who can do these things can explain the origin of the Christian Church. For others it must be enough to say: "The Holy Ghost fell on those that believed." No man saw the building of the New Jerusalem, the workmen crowded together, the unfinished walls and unpaved streets ; no man heard the

clink of trowel and pickaxe; it descended *out of heaven from God.*

If that conception of the Church be securely grasped, and considered in connection with the whole conception of a divine revolution, other things, which to some minds are obscure and doubtful, may become clear and certain. It may no longer seem unwarrantable to assert that the Church must be innately and thoroughly sacramental. Man and the outer world of nature are organic, and human activity in its perversion has distorted the significance of the created world and carried it to ends opposed to the divine purpose. The irruption of the divine activity within our race must therefore be expected to effect a redirection of the human approach to its material instrument and environment. And unless the Church could claim that in its central and characterizing act such redirection reaches its moral and mystical culmination, the Church could not claim to be now controlled by that revolutionary activity which was set forth in Christ. It could not claim unity with His ascended and glorified humanity.

Obviously, until His revolution has conquered the world, the world remains perverted, and the material instrument continues to register the lustful selfishness of men. It is put to unholy uses. And though the Church exists, it cannot say that the world is restored to Christ. Yet at one point it does lift some fragments of the material means, bread and wine, into a rightful relation with His living power, making of these humble elements the embodiment of that Presence which is always an urgent Force.

Thereby, at this point, man and the world are restored, and the Holy City is displayed, realized, entered.

Thus, and only thus, can it be claimed that the Church is veritably, and not merely symbolically, the Heavenly Jerusalem come down from God. And even then, this claim is worthily made, only when it is understood as involving a sacrificial communion which has for its scope the entire field of human life. The Sacramental Church is not meant dimly to foreshadow and suggest a kingdom yet to come, but by the practical implications of its own most sacred act to produce that Kingdom here on earth. The Kingdom is but the total application of what is already given in the Church. Uniting its act with the sacrificial activity of Christ, so that the Sacrament becomes essentially sacrificial and identified with Calvary, the Church thereby expressly pledges itself to bring the whole realm of nature, so far as that is controlled and employed by human agency, beneath the sway of that same sacrificial purpose. It dictates the social principle. Here, indeed, the mystical, the evangelical and the ethical elements of religion become mutually interpenetrative; and the Christian Society is seen to be the Body of that Redeemer, Who, standing in the midst of the throne in heavenly glory, yet walks the earth to purge all senates and all slums, to bring the decencies of divine brotherhood to commerce and industry, and to establish mankind in Holy Communion.

How to give adequate effect to its own significance in the modern world is the problem which bears

with increasing weight upon the Church at this period of its history. If the Kingdom be utterly impossible, in this world, the ascended humanity of Christ is of no effect. If the Ascension be without power, the Resurrection is meaningless. If the Resurrection be no genuine victory, the Passion is hopeless, and God has gone down in the struggle with the fierce wills of men. But by every assertion of the Faith, the Church is compelled to seek the Kingdom. It wages a painful warfare, and almost with despair beholds the onward rush of heedless life, pouring into new moulds of fashion, creating fresh but unenduring syntheses, unsatisfied, athirst, secretly tired despite the hectic simulation of vigour, yet never wholly prepared to accept Christ's gift of rest, or to submit to the Lordship of the Crucified.

What shall be the end of it? Is the Christian hope an idle dream, a web of old-time fancy, to be torn and scattered by the bleak draughts of modern reality? Let it be understood what this will mean. Let it be weighed and pondered. The Christian Faith claims to provide the absolute assurance, and the only absolute assurance, that Love is Lord of life and death. It says that God died for man. If that is not true, then there remains no final certainty that ethical love is more than an epiphenomenon of a natural process whereof the real trend escapes the power of man to grasp. All we can then do is to sit wearily down with science, amongst retorts and test-tubes, asking why the human creature ever appeared upon this planet. Or, if this be not to our taste, there remains a jazz dance at a night-

club. But if it be the truth, that at Bethlehem of Judea there broke upon the ways of men an Adventurer from the Heart of the Eternal, then we must gird upon us the armour of God, for the fight is not yet lost.

II

THE SOCIETY OF THE CROSS

FIFTEEN hundred years after Christ, declaring "It is finished," had cried aloud the news of His strange victory; ages after His Resurrection and Ascension; when the story of the martyrdom and triumph of the early Church was already ancient; when the old Empire had long since passed away, and a successor of the Apostles governed a Church whereof the membership was conterminous with Western civilization, a book was written by a man of wide experience in human affairs. He had held the office of Secretary to the Council, in the Republic of Florence, and his name was Niccollò Machiavelli. Having looked long upon the ways of men and the habits of this world, he announced in the following words his conclusion concerning the necessary principles of human conduct:

> The manner in which we live and that in which we ought to live are things so wide asunder that he who quits the one to betake himself to the other is more likely to destroy himself than to save himself, since anyone who would act up to a perfect standard of goodness in everything must be ruined among so many who are not good. It is essential, therefore, for a prince who wishes to maintain his position to have learned how to be other than good, and to use or not use goodness as necessity requires.

Perhaps the only remarkable feature of this judgment is its unusual honesty. Machiavelli had observed that in this world the motives of generosity and sacrifice were unremunerative, and he said so. He accepted the existence of a moral ideal as a somewhat puzzling and inconvenient fact; but seeing that it was impracticable except at great cost, he considered that common prudence must disregard it. What seemed to him entirely beyond consideration was the notion that anyone would willingly pay the cost, whether in private or in public action, and risk everything for the sake of doing that which *ought* to be done. He believed that as between man and man, between State and State, the practice of the Christian ethic involved a disadvantage which no philosopher could reasonably expect human nature to accept.

Undoubtedly his judgment was accurate, as regards that disadvantage. He saw that without a sufficiently general social acceptance of the Christian claim, no practical effect could be given to the sacrificial motive, beyond the sheer fact of the sufferings of the faithful witness; and he was proposing to teach men, not how to suffer, but how to succeed. Of course, his proposals are merely plans for wholesale and dismal catastrophe—if there be a different path which *ought* to be trodden. But there is no need to discuss the confusion of Machiavelli's philosophy. What concerns us here is his complaint that the ideal is not practical for the individual, because it is not practised by society: that it is impolitic for any particular State, because it is disregarded by all States. The Christian

ethic would not regard this as finally excusing either the individual or the State; but nevertheless we perceive here one reason why the Christian Gospel involves the Christian society.

Now, the writer of the words we have discussed lived at the last decadence of the Mediæval time—at the end of that period which had been inaugurated and characterized by the professed attempt to bring the whole of life into co-ordination with the Faith, and to secure that the entire human operation should be an extension of that divine social principle which was the Church's own declared basis. His work is of profound significance as witnessing to a change of outlook: the theoretic acceptance of other than Christian canons of conduct. Machiavelli is in line with one or two writers before him, and a great number after him, in setting aside the supernatural grounds of social ethic and assuming that the roots of civilization were planted in the visible world.

At all events, Church-civilization was now to be replaced by an order deriving its authority from purely secular sources and seeking its purpose in a mundane goal. Within that order we still live, probably to the satisfaction of few human beings outside the circle of the successful, consisting chiefly of advertisement agents and cinema stars. The fact that the Church's failure to maintain its own standards made easy the removal of great departments of life from the Church's control, has led to the confused and meaningless modern judgment, that this was necessarily a liberalizing enterprise. The question has, however, to be asked: What sanctions have been supplied for our

secular life, of greater social worth than those which do actually inhere in the creeds and sacraments of the Church? And what basis of social transactions has been discovered, of greater strength than that communion which is the Church's fellowship? Can secular political philosophy or modern economic theory claim to be founded upon a doctrine more "liberalizing" than that which asserts that God's Death calls all men into a sacrificial brotherhood?

The Church may indeed fail to secure a true application of that doctrine—may seem even to abandon the attempt. This seems an insufficient reason for abandoning all the practical conclusions of the doctrine. It seems an insufficient reason even for denying the responsibility of the Church for society, seeing that the Church always claims to be both the historic effect and the appointed guardian of the Christian revelation. The decadence and collapse of Mediævalism provides no ground whatever for the frivolous modern assumption that between the dogmas of the Church and the controlling principles of practical life there is to be no connection. The whole notion that the Church may dictate what we are to believe about God and our souls, but that we must derive from entirely different sources our beliefs about Parliament and our pockets, is radically absurd, upon any consistent Christian view. The Church is bound to seek the establishment of the Christian society. The present enthusiasm for Mediævalism displayed in some quarters is not to be described as fantastic. Despite the acid comments of some critics, it may

be held to display a certain strong sanity, at least in its main perception that Mediævalism envisaged a Church which aimed at being the whole of society. We may refuse our assent to any particular method of achieving that end; but the fact is plain that a Church which is content with a smaller purpose is traitorous to its own members. It leaves them ultimately to the dilemma of Machiavelli.

The Mediæval Church failed because its vision was foreshortened and its method inadequate. It took too much for granted. It did not sufficiently insist upon the full practice of its own theory. But the Reformed communions were no less naïve to begin with, and even less sincere at the end. They attempted at first to enforce a Church-discipline upon their own adherents, without any sufficient understanding of the ethical problems then emerging; and under the influence of evangelical subjectivism and individualism they conceived themselves, more and more, as limited societies within the wider body of an unchurched humanity. Finding that their members had to earn their livelihoods in that unregenerate world, they finally abandoned the attempt at any genuine discipline. Calvin had made a considerable show of it at Geneva; but Geneva was, for a time, the Church of Calvin. Later Protestantism left its people to make the best possible terms with both worlds. Catholicism, meanwhile, faced with unprecedented opposition and accosted by the gigantic forces released by the modern movement, relapsed into an acquiescence not dissimilar, though possibly never quite so complete. The Church everywhere retreated from its

purpose of being the whole of society, to become an association for the cultivation of pious emotions and heavenly hopes. At best, it could do no more than demand of the individual some respect for the more obvious laws of Christian conduct.

The result, however, has been the emergence of an acute contrast between the Christian ethic, and the world's standards: between the Cross as the measure of all things, and the commonly accepted ways and means of life. Capitalism and the class-war: nationalism and armaments: individualistic morals and a-moralism, have threatened to become the supreme and characteristic marks of secularism. And the Christian soul, set to work in a world governed by such principles, is increasingly embarrassed. Clearly, the Christian ethic may bankrupt any trader, and may expose any nation to destruction; and the only security for the cross-bearing life is to be sought in a society which, accepting the ethic of the divine revolution, provides the whole environment of its members. It is the task of the Church to recollect itself in this sense in the modern world. But how appallingly difficult is that task!

The difficulty is twofold. In the first place, the precise nature of the departure of the modern system from the Christian foundation has to be indicated; and this must be followed by the construction of a definitely Christian sociology, which shall honestly recognize the modern situation. Only with such an agreed body of social doctrine in existence can there be a confident Christian criticism of the present order, differentiated from

that offered by purely secular theories. The construction of such a Christian sociology is hampered by two factors—the divisions of the Church, and the confused alignment of Christian people within various political parties. But there is evidence that the need for clearly enunciated Christian standards, rooted in religious dogma and bearing the most definite practical reference, is being increasingly felt. Thoughtful Christian people are more and more disposed to consider that the alternatives are not exhausted by Capitalism and Communism, or by any compromising proposals equally based upon the secular hypothesis, and that Christian dogma is translatable in terms of politics and economics.

The Roman Church is displaying a revived interest in this subject. In England we have the work of individual economists, such as Mr Tawney and Mr Penty, attracting considerable attention. We observe the interest awakened by Copec, and the influence of the Industrial Christian Fellowship. And in one of the greatest industrial upheavals of recent years, the coal strike of 1926, our country saw a large number of bishops of the English Church, together with Free Church leaders, intervening, superficially without success, but certainly with portentous significance for the future.

It must not be overlooked that there have come, from the English Church, within the past decade, official pronouncements which do in principle commit, or at least invite, its members to an attitude which cannot be called indefinite. The Report of the Archbishop's Fifth Committee of Inquiry (1918), declares that " The first charge upon every

industry should be the payment of a sufficient wage to enable the worker to maintain himself and his family in health and honour." And further : "The principle of a living wage involves not only adequate payment during employment, but continuity of employment." The Report of the Lambeth Conference (1920) holds that "Fellowship is endangered if all who serve do not share equitably in the results of labour. . . . The Church will fearlessly claim that the human character of every worker is more sacred than his work; that his worth as a child of God and member of the fellowship must not be imperilled by any form of industrial slavery." A Resolution of the same Conference says that "An outstanding and pressing duty of the Church is to convince its members of the necessity of nothing less than a fundamental change in the spirit and working of our economic life. This change can only be effected by accepting as the basis of industrial relations the principle of co-operation in service for the common good, in place of unrestricted competition for private or sectional advantage."

These are indications that the Church is finding its position, in a world which ignores its principles, simply dishonourable and intolerable. They prove that there is a strong disposition to demand that the secular presuppositions shall give place, at least in the minds of Christian people, to the conception of a society founded and consolidated by the Sacrifice of the Cross. The political loyalties and the economic philosophies of recent centuries are losing their hold upon Christian minds everywhere; and

the Divine Revolution, whereby the sacrificial activity of God becomes the principle of conscious social construction, is being rediscovered.

The second difficulty, however, is greater—to secure a means of practically applying the Christian standards in the modern world. The sheer immensity of the human operation, and the bewildering complexity of the economic machine, seem to baffle us at every point when we seek a mode of reconstruction. The strangely mechanical and yet amorphous character of our social organization presents a problem which must seem, at times, quite insoluble; the problem of where to begin, with the slightest hope of effecting any considerable results. The Church came into control of Western Europe during the Dark Ages, because no other control was available. But to-day the Church stands apart, a spectator, and little more.

Nevertheless there are certain elements in the situation which, when understood, may preclude despair. Manifestly the machine is not running smoothly; and there are competent observers who believe that it is cracking. It is quite possible that the secular world may find itself, at no distant day, in conscious need of some new directivity, and will discover none apart from the teaching and leadership of the Church. Certainly it is likely that the present situation will change in one of two possible ways. Either there will be a yet closer centralization of secular control; or there will come a widespread movement of decentralization, and the regrouping of human life in smaller social and industrial units. And in either event, the strategic

positions will be more apparent than they are in the present confusion, and the Church will more clearly perceive what are the precise positions to be assailed and captured. The battle is a long one, and the contemporary situation is but a phase of it. We shall do well not to allow ourselves to be too easily discouraged; for if our purpose is clear and strong, the means and method of realizing it will assuredly appear. Hard study is essential, and we require the increased attention of Christian thinkers to the whole field of economics and to the subject of politics both national and international. And we need a closer relation between these studies, and that of dogmatic theology.

Meanwhile, the Church has to prepare itself for a signal service to the world, by cultivating the conviction that a human society related in all its activity to the divine deed at Calvary, is a divinely intended result of our Lord's Passion. It has to see that to limit the effect of the Cross to the sphere of personal pietism is unwarrantable, since our Lord Himself consistently indicated that His sacrifice was to be the foundation of His Kingdom. The revolutionary implications of the central dogmas of the Faith must be accepted, not as the harmless preoccupation of a few amiable extremists, but as the authoritative interpretation of those dogmas. The application must fearlessly be made to the subjects of wages, property, investments, industrial management, and to the whole purpose of industrial undertaking. Christian people must be taught the full meaning of the Faith.

Upon the other hand, so vigorous a Christian

apologetic has to be presented to the world, as to carry conviction that only the death of God in the midst of men is a sanction and inspiration sufficiently strong to provide the basis of a truly humane order. The reply of all worldly wisdom to the dreamers is that their dreams are admirable but impossible; and apart from a revelation of Eternal Reality, there is nothing to disprove this judgment. But the Church claims to unite men with One Who not only died, but rose again to ascend to the throne of God; and it is this faith in the exaltation of the Crucified which provides the ground of our hope for mankind. Translated into the practical terms of this world, it means that Christendom is not a lost possibility: that we are not necessarily to stray for ever in the jungles of selfishness and pride: that martyrdom is not the only kind of victory reserved for the sacrificial motive: that since the Wounded Lamb is upon the throne of heaven, the government of this world may yet be upon His shoulders.

Thus the immediate duty of the Church in relation to the realization of the Kingdom, is first to accept resolutely the social implications of the most sacred doctrines of the Faith; then to construct a Christian sociology having in view the essential features of modern life; and finally to assert before the world that Calvary provides the only sufficient inspiration and motive of social idealism, and that the Risen and Ascended Christ is the only sufficient ground of hope for humanity's noblest dreams. Performing this duty the Christian Society, now crippled and obscured by the dominating secular assumptions, has to carry on a guerilla warfare with

the present system, seeking everywhere to outflank or to undermine it, always with the expectation that in the future the actual centres of political and economic control will be opened to the Christian assault. And at present, no opportunity, however humble, may be neglected. To teach half a dozen youths in a slum the laws of Christ's Kingdom may be a service bearing incommensurate results.

It ought to need no saying that now, as always, the strength of the Christian social witness depends to a very great extent upon the witness of the individual lives of men and women. It is true that the whole meaning of the Faith can appear only within a thoroughly Christian society; and whether it be a man's duty upon any particular occasion to refuse to participate in the operations of the secular society, and thus to bring himself, and possibly his family, to poverty or even to starvation, is a problem for serious casuistry. That situations do arise in which a Christian has no alternative but to forfeit his livelihood, need not be doubted. Upon the other hand, the decision to accommodate oneself to secular demands in some special instance is not necessarily cowardice; but such accommodation is justifiable only when it can be honestly related with the firm purpose of abolishing the system which demands it. It is indeed very desirable that the Church should give clear guidance upon this difficult question and afford its people the benefit of positive teaching concerning the permissibility and the limits of accommodation to the present ethical standards of trade and industry.

But it must always be insisted that the Cross is

still the Cross, and that we are called upon to bear it before the Kingdom can come. Mystical and sacramental union with Christ in His Sacrifice is to be *practised*, in and through our daily problems of conduct. We must learn to use the most sacred terms of our religion with the most definitely practical reference, and considering problems of profit and loss, problems of commerce and finance, to pray with profound sincerity :

> Let me evermore abide
> Hidden in Thy wounded side.

When tradesmen, bankers, politicians, artisans, begin to practise the divine revolution which took Christ to Golgotha, a pierced hand will be laid upon our confusion, and the power of an Enthroned Manhood will be made manifest in our midst. But such practice is the fruit of unwavering faith and profound spiritual consecration. Saintship is our chief need. It is the saint who is the real revolutionist. Those will prepare the way of the Lord to-day, whose hearts have been broken by the breaking of His Sacred Heart, who know Him as their Brother, who adore Him as their God and Saviour.

APPENDIX

PASSION AND ACTION

The Passion of our Lord was the supreme measure and final issue of His earthly humiliation. It is, of all the facts of the Christian Faith, the most poignantly effective in Christian experience; and it must therefore be accepted by believers as of great importance in determining their general view of Reality, and in the construction of Christian philosophy. No worthy or fruitful relation between the sufferings of Christ and the needs of man can, indeed, be established apart from a doctrine of genuine Incarnation. The history of doctrine proves this beyond doubt. No preoccupation with the incidents of Gethsemane and Calvary, no dwelling upon the Sacrifice there offered, can avail to restore the soul and reconstruct society, unless there arise a clear conviction that He who made that Sacrifice was very God of very God. Any lower view will eventually resolve the Christian religion into either an ethic or a sentiment. But while a Christology is of fundamental necessity, it is the issue of the Incarnation in the Agony and Passion which not only brings the greatest compunction to the human heart, but also elicits the full implications of Christian philosophy.

Theologians have speculated as to whether or not there would have been an Incarnation apart from the emergence of sin and the need of redemp-

tion; and some have reached an affirmative conclusion. But an Incarnation in such conditions, so far as we can see, would not inevitably have sanctioned certain assertions about God and man which the Passion does undoubtedly support. It might have been interpreted as the predestined fulfilment of a development, every step of which had been controlled; and thus the doctrine of human freedom would still have lacked an absolute sanction in revelation. Nor should we have had so clear a ground, as we now possess, for maintaining, as against certain types of philosophy, the freedom of God. It must be admitted that if man had never sinned, he might have gained other and sufficient assurance of these truths; but, for us, it is the Passion, revealing anguish and enormous conflict as elements in the divine experience, which illuminates with inextinguishable light the nature of Ultimate Reality.

The dogma of a divine Person tortured and done to death by the hands of men does involve a conception of God and man as free: of action as real. For no attempt to set forth such sacrifice as intrinsically necessitated for God, and thus to represent Calvary merely as a necessary mode of self-realization of the Absolute Consciousness, can ever be thought out. Our Lord's Passion is in harmony with the Christian conception of creation as an act, not of necessity, but of overflowing love and free grace. But it reveals that original motive as now in conflict with an opposition which is real in the sense that it arises, not from any self-postulated necessity within an Absolute Consciousness, but from the will of an agent in some sense independent.

The Christian Faith presupposes two positions which at first sight seem to be radically and even distressingly irreconcilable. It declares the complete and transcendent perfection of God, and also the genuine activity of God. Yet the retention of both positions appears to be necessary, if we are to believe in the reality of the Supreme Being, and also in the reality of the universe, without confounding them. The pantheism of Spinoza, attempting to overcome the difficulty, left the whole problem in an unsatisfactory condition, because, regarding thought and extension as attributes of the Substance which alone exists, much as its angles may be regarded as attributes of a triangle, it left the interpretation of life an open question. Spinoza, indeed, considered that Substance in itself had no attributes: thought and extension were merely the necessary categories under which the mind must represent God; but since we cannot escape from these categories, God becomes, for us, identical with thought and extension. It is impossible to conceive a triangle apart from its angles, or to say that both the triangle *and* its angles are separately real. We may say that the angles necessarily appear as the result of an analysis of the triangle, or that the triangle is necessitated by those angles. The reality of the triangle depends as much upon the reality of the angles as does the reality of the angles upon that of the triangle. There is no escape in saying that the angles are only our mode of perceiving the triangle.

A pantheistic conception, therefore, eventually reduces God to the level of the universe, in its very

attempt to interpret the universe as divine; for all that the universe contains must be identified with God. This is obviously a surrender of both positions which, we have said, must be defended. It surrenders the perfection of God, since all imperfection is now included within the divine attributes, and the world's misery and lust are actually of God's essence; and it surrenders the activity of God, since, at any rate in the mathematical scheme of Spinoza, the universe is not created but necessarily involved as an attribute of the Eternal Being of God.

Two lines of philosophical speculation in the modern period have attempted to resolve the problem by opposite methods. Upon the one hand Absolute Idealism, seeking the total unification of all experience in an Absolute Consciousness, was compelled to suppose that human consciousness was a mode of the Absolute. And as previous schools of idealism had insisted upon consciousness as essential in the structure of all real existence, the Absolutists had perforce to deny the possibility of any existence *beyond* that of the Absolute. This might seem to preserve the perfection of God, since the experience of a real whole may be conceived as differing from the experience of its finite modes, and thus our perceived imperfections may be transmuted in the Absolute, as they cannot be in the barren *identification* of God with all things as we find them. Even here the difficulties are great; but it certainly forfeited belief in the genuine activity of God, since there could be no passage of real energy from Him in the

creation of a universe distinguishable from Him—because the whole time-process was conceived as a mode of the Absolute, and the attempt to show that this conception could support the notion of genuine activity at all was foredoomed to failure.

The reason is plain. It is impossible to conceive an Absolute Consciousness, within which lies all reality, ever adding to its own content by a process confined to itself. It is enormously difficult to conceive an Eternal and Absolute Consciousness, merely as consciousness, originating or containing a time-process. If it is originally absolute, there is no need for such a process to emerge or to exist in any way. If it is not originally absolute, how can it achieve absoluteness from within itself? And the more the Absolutists strove to assert the reality of time, and of human action as a mode of the Absolute's action, the less was it possible to maintain the Absolute as absolute, or, in theological terms, to defend the genuine perfection of God.

The impulse to assert the reality of action led, upon the other hand, to a different line of argument. By some thinkers, after Schopenhauer, the Cause of the universe was conceived as Will, seeking unrealized ends. Translated into theological terms, this became the conception of God as imperfect and limited, seeking self-completion and fuller realization in and through creation. This, of course, gives up the whole theistic position. If God has need of anything, He cannot be the source of that which He needs; and we are compelled to posit the existence of an end or potentiality outside and beyond His own Being, *ab initio*. The existence of

this end or potentiality, however, becomes in itself a stupendous problem. God is no longer God in the theistic sense, and there arises the need of conceiving a duality or plurality of uncaused existences.

Modern Pluralism, since Leibnitz, has supposed some such multiplicity of monads, and Professor James Ward has attempted to conceive them, constructing, under the presidency, so to speak, of the supreme monad, God, a harmonious correlation between themselves which may be described as a universe. It is said to be characteristic of them that they are aware of each other and are attracted to each other; and unity and perfection are thus ends to be achieved rather than an original starting-point. The working out of such ends gives a universe at present in the making, and a process in which activity is real. But this conception appears to involve much self-contradiction. The existence of a hierarchy of uncaused monads may be difficult enough to account for; but what is yet harder to explain is their common need of unity and communion amongst themselves—to say why, out of their multiverse, they should energize toward the construction of a universe.

If such a need or impulse is common to the primary elements of a pluralistic universe, that common need has to be accounted for. Apparently it must proceed from some already existing principle of unity which has not yet been considered. And since that unknown factor affects, and must therefore underlie, them all, that factor is obviously in control of these so-called primary elements; and it is difficult to suppose that such control could exist,

apart from their complete dependence upon that controlling factor. It may even be said that Pluralism, once it admits real action toward the construction of a universe, only puts the problem of creation further back, and leaves us with the old question still confronting us. For how there can be a primal factor of unity which does not imply completeness and perfection of being, cannot be stated. The moment one begins the attempt to account for creation by positing the imperfection and need of the original cause, one has to assume some other self-existence or potentiality beyond, and independent of, that cause—and this, as we have seen, leads back again to an original unity. And the history of modern Idealism has shown that the notion of "becoming" and "development" *within* that unity is impossible of elucidation. Growth implies relation with an environment; but what is the "environment" of the growing Absolute? The problem of reconciling the transcendent perfection and the real activity of God seems thus, so far, insoluble.

It needs no lengthy argument to prove that neither of these lines of speculation is compatible with belief in the Passion of our Lord as a revelation of God. Absolute Idealism, by confining all consciousness, and the whole process of history, within the Absolute, makes moral evil in some sense a mode of the Absolute. It may be maintained that evil appears only to be rejected, or rather transmuted, and thus to minister to the total enrichment of the Absolute. But this is a whole infinity of distance from the Agony of our Lord at Gethsemane. It is

actually true that evil overcome may open the way to new and greater good; but it is morally inconceivable that evil, regarded as real action, is deliberately produced by God in the time-process as a necessary condition of His own complete experience. Nor does the conflict between moral opposites, both arising from one source in the Absolute, seem a very real conflict, or one of which a crown of thorns and a blood-stained cross can be appropriate symbols.

Nor, again, can Christian theology allow that, to our Lord, the conflict was other than critical and tremendously real. The claim is that He is God, and that in a fierce battle He sweated blood and uttered great, strange cries. If He was so immersed in the time-process that His whole view of evil reveals nothing more than the human standpoint, from which evil is simply unresolved, stark evil and a terrifying danger, then upon the dogmas of Absolute Idealism He was in no particular and unique sense a revelation of God, and it is impossible to claim that Calvary has any unique significance. But if He was indeed God, then the evil which caused Him so sharp agony and distress is certainly other than an eternally necessary but eternally transmuted element in the Absolute Consciousness.

Upon the other hand, that line of thought which begins with a limited God and is necessarily carried on to Pluralism, can give no final assurance that in the real conflict between good and evil the ultimate and controlling principle of the universe is good. It cannot say how far God is limited, and therefore it cannot say why it calls Him God. Clearly, if there is a plurality of self-existent entities operating

to construct a harmonious universe, there is nevertheless some opposition to this process. And if these entities are uncaused and self-existent, we have no means of conceiving how far this harmonizing process can be carried out: what is the ultimate weight of the forces of opposition. And thus we have no final certitude as to whether Jesus or His enemies represent the predominant character of Ultimate Reality. Such a situation was frankly accepted by Mr H. G. Wells in his *God the Invisible King*, where he conceives a God, essentially limited, the leader and captain of humanity: but, behind this God, that veiled Being, whereof the attitude to mankind is unknowable, but may be indifferent or even hostile both to the Captain God and to the race of man.

But the Christian Faith declares that Christ, smitten and scorned, does actually set forth the nature of Ultimate Reality. Nothing in the creative source of the universe can contradict what we see upon the Cross. And the whole tragedy of the crucifixion proceeds from the very definite *motif* that such humiliation, while it displays the very being and nature of the Everlasting King, was not intrinsically necessary for Him for His own sake. God, in the Christian view, is perfect, and has eternally, within His own nature, all felicity. It is not because of need that He created this universe. Had He never created it, He would still have been all-perfect God. His real action in creation is to be ascribed to overflowing love and generous grace. Nor, upon the Christian view, is this an incongruous act, a mere divine caprice. For Christian thought

conceives that already and eternally in God there is fellowship—not static unity, but an eternal self-giving and going forth, which allows in God both perfection and real action. And this real action *within* the Godhead may, through His infinite love, issue in genuine creation. Dr Temple, indeed, if I understand his argument,[1] would relate the existence of a time-process to the Triune mode of the divine existence; and the principle appears to be philosophically sound. This conception of creation allows the retention of both positions, the perfection of God and the real action of God: the sovereignty of God, and a real universe. In such a universe God at least is free, since He is its free and unconditioned source, creating, not because of need, but out of the very principle of His eternal perfection.

It must be pointed out, nevertheless, that, having created, God is now in some sense self-limited. And if He has created beings capable of spiritual fellowship with Himself, He must in consistency respect the fact of His own creation, if His own will is to be carried out in that creation. If, in order to work out that purpose it becomes necessary for God to lie in a manger and hang upon a cross, we have certainly a very clear indication as to the nature of that which He has created. We see at once that this is a universe in which may arise genuine contingency: that within it, action and change are not merely the orderly results, however real and new, of a creative evolution conducting the process through progressive stages, but that action and change may proceed from wills in opposition

[1] In *Christus Veritas*.

to the creative purpose. That is to say, in effect, that man has the power of creating a situation which, even for God, is grave and fraught with possibilities truly disastrous. Not, of course, that the situation created by human sin could ever prove disastrous to God in the transcendent perfection of His Eternal Being; but it may actually thwart the going-forth of God in self-limitation for the sake of creation.

Throughout the whole history of Christian theology, the precise nature of the effects of sin has been a subject of controversy. From the days when the primitive Church had to combat Gnosticism, which posited a necessary taint of evil in the material world, and thus in man because he is incarnate in a physical body, onward through the argument between St Augustine and the Pelagians, up to the emergence of Calvinism, and, a little later, in the conflict between Port Royal and the Jesuits, this problem has agitated men, to define what was the actual contingency in the human situation which brought the Eternal Son of God to shed His blood upon the Cross. In one direction man's depravity has been so emphasized as to deprive him of any remnants of virtue, and, indeed, to deny the capacity of his will to perform a single act of merit in the eyes of God. Thus it was said that the virtues of the pagans were splendid sins. Calvin, however, discussing the whole problem in relation to God's sovereignty, concluded that man had fallen by divine decree—God's "horrible decree" as he himself calls it: and salvation is given to some members of the race, apart from any merit, and

purely as a demonstration of God's unfettered sovereignty.

But this attempt to uphold the freedom of God by denying the freedom of man is not compatible with any belief in an actual work wrought by Christ in His Passion; for if those who are condemned are condemned by an original ordinance of their Creator, and if those who are saved are saved by a similar predestination, it is difficult to understand the necessity for any subsequent divine action within the time-process, or to say what such action, even though it issue in the crucifixion of Incarnate God, can be supposed to effect. This difficulty is in nowise overcome by the explanation that the Incarnation and Passion of Christ were methods of working out the divine decree. They cause nothing: they alter nothing; there is no basic significance in the redeemed soul's relation with Christ, for its acceptance of Christ is a predestined registering of a decree already pronounced in that soul's favour.

It may be remarked, at this point, that belief in our Lord's Passion as an effectual operation, is as little compatible with certain recent, but already outmoded, pseudo-scientific theories of heredity and degeneracy, as with theological doctrines of predestination. The notion of human destiny, irrevocably determined, whether by divine decree or by rigid and indefeasible natural law, can have no point of sympathetic contact with the conception of the Cross as a real adventure, and the sufferings of Christ as capable of working positive revolution in the world and actually regenerating the race.

We may at any time have to choose between the Faith and some ephemeral theory which would treat masses of men and some entire races as hopelessly lost. But there is this to be said for the Faith: it does not ask us to draw the line between the humanly valuable and the worthless. It solves that problem by informing us, to begin with, that we are all lost—and may all possibly be found.

In the opposite direction, others have supposed that the moral inadequacy of man, which is certainly an element in human experience, is but an incident of growth. If those who take this view happen to believe in moral freedom, they will suppose that increasing knowledge and experience will allow man to exercise his choice more and more for the better. If this were true, however, the significance of our Lord's Passion would largely disappear, since it would be hard to believe that God Himself became involved in some tragedy of shame and pain for the sake of a world which could, and in all probability would, gradually reach perfection by its own efforts. This has always been the theological antinomy dogging the steps of Pelagian thought.

In our own day, those who hold, in any sense, the natural perfectibility of man, are more accustomed to believe that this can be wrought out either by social and economic changes, or by the control of heredity by the elimination of the unfit and by scientific selection in breeding. Thus, secular Socialism believes in the possibility of improving the individual by a State economic; and Eugenism posits the improvement of corporate life by the application of compulsory hygiene to the

individual. Neither view can have any direct relation with the doctrine of a divine Atonement procured by the suffering Son of God; but then, neither view has any serious conception of what is meant by "improvement." The failure to relate any proposal for human betterment to a conception of Ultimate Reality, must assuredly convict these proposals of shallowness and inadequacy. No large boasting about the future of mankind can ultimately disguise the fact that, though man be free, his freedom is never rightly employed for any ends of his own unaided choosing; for he is not self-caused or uncaused, but created by a Will not his own, and is therefore called to do the will of his Creator. His future must depend entirely upon how he obeys that call; and it is the testimony of the general heart that he has disobeyed it. And the fact of the consciousness of sin is as much a datum for philosophy as any other ascertained fact.

The main Christian tradition has avoided both extremes, refusing to allege the utter depravity and corruption of man upon the one hand, and upon the other refusing to allow the possibility of human perfectibility by merely human means. It will not have it that human freedom has been destroyed, or the power of genuine moral choice completely obliterated by sin; but it does regard the effects of the misuse of freedom as so seriously impairing man's moral nature, as to make it certain that apart from supernatural interposition the prospect must be one of disaster. And the measure of the danger is revealed precisely in the fact that for the sake of human expediency the Son of God was

scourged and crucified. If that happened, the human situation is exhibited, by human action, as one of dire peril. A man may choose to crucify Christ, or to kneel in self-abasement before Christ; but apart from Christ he cannot, by his own effort, win to the true end of his existence, for he was born and bred within that race whose reaction upon the intrusion of God was to thrust Him forth with blows and jeers.

This elementary Christian dogma of a race astray, perverted and impaired, is one which certain types of modern thought find extremely distasteful: as the individual must always find it distasteful to be assured that he himself is astray. Yet surely this assertion is consonant with the known facts of history and with the heart's self-knowledge. The enormous prestige gained by natural science has lent to the notion of a perfectly orderly universe a general acceptance entirely unwarranted. Two things have been overlooked in making this picture of a machine-like and efficient world—the history of a soul and the history of society: two very disorderly phenomena. And it is the Passion of God Incarnate which, for those who accept it, consummately proves that this disorder is painfully real. The individual soul is in such peril that Christ may reach it only by going after it, upon a rough and terrible road, as a shepherd after a lost sheep. And society is in such confusion that God Himself must come to create society afresh. As Plato and Aristotle saw, long ago, society is produced by the needs of moral life: it is the necessary mode whereby man realizes the ideal end of his own spiritual being.

Apart from it, the individual is but an abstraction. But only fidelity to that ideal end can secure the social basis; and sin therefore has a corporate effect, unredeemed man producing unredeemed institutions which are perpetually subject to sure decay or swift collapse.

This real misdirection of real human activity was met by real action on the part of God. It is necessary for any theodicy to show that God's mode of meeting evil justifies His permission of evil; and in Christian thought, this is held to be amply accomplished by the revelation of a divine activity, reaching forth through unmeasured suffering for our redemption and renewal. But the problem of explaining how such divine action becomes practically effective, has taxed Christian thought through the centuries. That the Incarnation, issuing in the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord, does indeed produce practical effects of the greatest consequence, cannot be doubted; but to find a sufficient *rationale* of the process is extremely difficult and may even, perhaps, be impossible for us. Nevertheless devout inquiry is not to be discouraged, nor has the Church discouraged it, even though she has never formulated an authoritative theory.

The New Testament cannot be said to state a theory of Atonement—this is common knowledge; but this does not mean that its statements are so vague and formless as to warrant any theory that may be devised. Upon the contrary, there is nothing in the New Testament to warrant the early view that Christ's Sacrifice was the surrender of

Himself to the evil one, in order to buy man from his power. Gregory of Nazianzus supposed that this was the purpose of our Lord's suffering: He was surrendered into the hands of Satan, as the price of sinful man's liberation; but Satan discovered that he was incapable of holding the Son of God. Thus redemption was accomplished by what seems a mere plan for outwitting the devil. Clearly this conception, as usually understood, was an unwarranted deduction from the great and splendid phrases of the New Testament, and the Church had necessarily to pass through further thought and experience before a more fitting doctrinal statement could be reached.

The work of St Anselm, in *Cur Deus Homo*, was of critical importance for the whole history of soteriology. He held that human sin had involved mankind in a debt which only mankind ought to pay but which only God could pay. It was therefore necessary, if man was to be saved, that One who was both God and man should pay the debt. Our Lord lived a sinless, human life, and therefore stood outside condemnation. His sufferings, unmerited by Him, thus became available for the satisfaction of God's justice and for the benefit of mankind. *Cur Deus Homo* suggests more questions than it attempts to answer. Nevertheless it did at least go some way toward stating the main lines along which the problem was to be approached. Its argument has been called forensic; but it must not be overlooked that the very adoption of apparently legalistic forms of thought was due to the perception of the enormity of human sin—a per-

ception which our Lord's Passion had immensely stimulated.

For some centuries, theories of "satisfaction" continued to hold the field, and Reformation theology carried on the tradition, sometimes to such crude and extravagant lengths as to presuppose a real conflict of purpose between God the Father and His Eternal Son—the Father being apparently unwilling to forgive, until persuaded by the pleadings of His Son, who offers His own Agony and Death as a substitute for the penalties owed by man to infinite justice. The numerous and various theories of Atonement propounded during the nineteenth century did at least exhibit a tendency to a truer foundation for evangelical thought, in the conception of Atonement as primarily the purpose of the Godhead, and in the view that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

But it must be remarked that many of these theories, by over-emphasizing the purely subjective effects of our Lord's Passion in the consciousness of the individual, had the result of seeming to diminish the sinfulness of sin. It came to appear that all that man needed was an "example": that from God's side redemption and forgiveness were comparatively easy tasks, and that only the obstinacy of those particular people who were our Lord's contemporaries, made the process incidentally painful. It seemed that Christ came to exhibit the love of God, still existing in spite of all that men had done; and that while His Death upon the Cross actually reveals that forgiving love in a strong light, it might have happened that forgiveness could

have been declared without any such extremity of sacrifice.

This may have been a wholesome corrective of unbalanced theories of "substitution," but it does not seem to cover all the ground indicated by the New Testament, and particularly it fails to account for our Lord's own attitude as recorded in the Gospel narratives, where we find Him assuming that His Death is the necessary basis of the Kingdom, and yet almost shrinking in dread before His Passion, as from something of horror, unprecedented and ineffably terrible. Here is suggested an element ignored by those theories which regard the Passion as a martyr-like declaration of God, whereof the sole scope and significance is in its human effect. This element was more or less safeguarded in the so-called "objective" theories of Atonement; but these were too frequently found departing from the fundamental truth that the Cross is indeed primarily the work of God's love.

The very word "love" may serve to bring us to the consideration of a certain aspect of our Lord's Agony and Passion which has not received sufficient attention. It recalls us to the truth that our Lord was the Incarnate Representative, not of a God Who is undifferentiated unity, but Who is Himself Society; a Trinity of Persons, an eternal perfection of relations within a communion, not static, but cohering by the dynamic operation of self-giving love. If God is Love, His Being must be for ever capable of sustaining, within itself, the complete activity of Love: and this indicates perfection of real social activity. And whatever else is to be

found at Gethsemane and Calvary, it must never be forgotten that there we have the approach of the perfectly social to the unsocial. One who stood always consubstantiate with the divine social life, stood then also within the broken and vitiated society of man.

This, of course, is true, only upon a full Christology. Arianism, which denied the real deity of our Lord, and such forms of adoptionism as suppose that He is a man deified, the creature now being equated with the Creator, make impossible the supposition that the Passion was veritably endured by God. At the most He can be no more than a compassionate spectator. Nestorianism, with its view of a human person somehow associated with a divine person, makes the whole subject of Atonement hopelessly obscure. Those vague and non-committal Christologies which date from Schleiermacher give no better result. And the doctrine of Jesus as being "of the value of God to us," a misinterpretation of the stronger but quite inadequate position of Ritschl, is similarly pointless in face of our deep need of real action, for our sakes, and within the time-process, by the perfect and transcendent.

It must be observed, however, that the Passion, the actual Cross, the racking thirst, the piercing of the spear, the mockery and the shame, were not endured by an incarnate Trinity. Catholic theology has always, in various ways, insisted upon this, and the Catholic view is entirely scriptural. What we see, therefore, is that our Lord, doing the will of His Father, did something *for* His Father. He in

His own Person brought the life of the Blessed Trinity vicariously into a relation hitherto inexperienced. Whereas in the divine life love is always answered by love, it was now to be answered by personal hatred. In Christ, the central citadel of the universe is given over into the hands of sinners. But He satisfies, not the outraged dignity of a heavenly monarch, but the infinite love of God; and for the love of the Blessed Trinity He performs this unprecedented service. His shrinking, then, was not for His own sake, but for the sake of the life and love of God, now, in Him, to be given into the vile hands of men, to be contradicted and spurned. The appearance of the perfectly social within the confusion of the unsocial must at any time have provoked such antagonism, in which the only weapon of the social will is love, and its ultimate act a complete self-sacrifice. And in the actual moral situation of men, Christ could work no redemption without manifesting the divine will to immense suffering. Only thus could the truly social display itself in relation with the unsocial. But His Cross looks, as it were, not only toward men, but toward God, since He, within the time-process, wrought a work on God's behalf.

Now, while we have here the recognition of the element which has been called "objective," we have also the full acceptance of the Passion as God's own revelation. But we see it also as the revelation of the nature of sin as real and disastrous action, so that the inward nature of a lie is that it would, if it could, ultimately destroy God. Here also is the revelation of Ultimate Reality as intensely active,

choosing a new experience in face of a new situation; and there is an elucidation of the nature of God's action and the nature of man's action at one and the same time. The Cross is thus the point of conflict where two lines of opposed motion meet.

Our Lord's Resurrection, and the persistence of the faith of His followers, proves that, in the dire conflict, "victory remained with love." It proved that in the last resort, the evil is not capable of destroying the good. But this, again, was not a static situation. The Christian revelation came not only to reveal something; but, because it was a revelation by real action, its purpose was genuinely to effect something in history: to create a new start, in the regeneration of the soul and of society. If the Cross presupposes the real action of sin, the Atonement presupposes the real action both of God's grace, and of man's converted will, receiving that grace. There was a true, organic entrance of God into the race. He came down, for our salvation, and was made man, born of a woman in circumstances of time, place and nationality. And if an effective Atonement is impossible in those Christologies which deny or diminish our Lord's deity, it is equally true that the full effects of Atonement cannot be set forth by those Christologies which deny or diminish His humanity. Docetism, which resolved that humanity into a phantasmal appearance, Apollinarianism, which mutilated our Lord's human psychology, Eutychianism, which merged His human nature in His deity, were alike incapable of exhibiting a relation of divine with human, such as should provide a basis for a divine-

human society to be perpetuated in this world. They did not show God in control of a full and real humanity, and thus left it an open question whether true manhood was susceptible of such control. The Catholic dogma of the Person of Christ means nothing if it does not imply that the divine purpose is to recall the whole life of humanity to harmony with the will of God.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that a real redemptive activity of God in a world of real, but misdirected human action, must effect a redeemed ethic in conformity with itself; and since ethical life can be lived only within and through a social medium, this straightway involves the Church. And since the corporate life of mankind requires a corporate use of material means, the Church involves the sacramental principle—the control of material means for spiritual ends. Thus the sacraments of the Church are not static symbols, but are modes of divine-human action. Confusion and decadence at the close of the Middle Ages made it possible for the active effects of the Atonement to be denied full expression within the Church. Upon the one hand the supremely ethical nature of the communion of men in Christ was caricatured by the practice of granting wholesale indulgences for money-payments —a practice at once uncatholic and out of all contact with the energy of the Redeemer. Upon the other hand, the extreme isolation of subjective faith by Luther, and his fantastic fear of " works," undoubtedly served again to divorce Christian teaching from practical effect. It is true, as Troeltsch, Tawney and others have reminded us, that the Reformers carried

over the social discipline of the Church; but it is also true that they abandoned it very swiftly. From the operation of these causes the Church still suffers. Nevertheless, the Church, the Society of the redeemed, witnessing to a new sanction of behaviour within a new social cohesion, stands even to-day as the world's most significant phenomenon.

There remains, however, the task of giving to her own presuppositions a still wider application than they have ever yet received, and of claiming for her field of influence the entire range of human activity. She has to teach that, in a sinful world, passion is the most powerful mode of action, since it is in line with the revealed energy of God. She has to produce the conviction that in all pride and self-assertiveness, whether these appear in politics, economics, or in private behaviour, there is a rotten core of death. It has to be declared that the divine irruption into this world, in Christ, was intended to deflect the whole activity of man from chaos and disaster to an order and culture which should reflect the life of the Blessed Trinity.

For this purpose, so-called "churchless" Christianity is utterly inadequate; and for the reason that while the Atonement presupposes the reality of action, human and divine, the action of moral agents involves a social relation, and redeemed action therefore implies a definite, redeemed society, founded upon the historic Passion of God, not merely as its end, but as its condition. The Church visible and militant is the only Church which can have meaning in a world where God has stood face to face with His enemies, to be flung forth as a foe;

and that Church springs from the visible, incarnate militancy of God, from His real energizing in face of an actual situation of danger, set forth in One Who, going as a sheep to the slaughter, declared that He laid down His life of His own accord. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."

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